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CONTEMPORARY EMPIRICISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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THERE has been a very lively renewal of interest in religion of late, especially among intellectuals. The part which philosophers take in this is reflected in a number of popular discussions of religion by philosophers, in radio talks and symposia, conferences on the philosophy of religion, as well as in subtle contributions to learned journals. The reasons for this interest in religion are many, but prominent among them is the peculiar position of philosophy today. As is well known, the dominant strain in philosophy, in English-speaking countries at present, is a severely empiricist one, and this has as one of its most distinctive features the technique by which it is claimed to show that assertions which seem to be of a non-empirical character, other than strictly logical or mathematical ones, gain their apparent plausibility through linguistic confusions of various kinds, notably our proneness to hypostatize abstractions. This development in philosophy has led to concern with religion in a number of very different ways, of which the following seem to be the most important.

Firstly, several philosophers have found in religion a sphere of investigation peculiarly suitable for the display of the new techniques and their usefulness in disposing of bogus claims. This usually goes with a sceptical view of religion, although the sceptic has not by any means a monopoly of the right to expose the muddles which affect much of our religious thinking, muddles in which linguistic confusion has had its part. If the assumptions usually made by the philosophy of linguistic analysis are sound, then religion seems to be the field *par excellence* for the operation of it and for the validation of the therapeutic claims commonly made on its behalf. *Secondly*, a number of philosophers, mainly young ones, seem to have found themselves in a very unpleasant dilemma, namely that of having strong religious

allegiances and, also, finding themselves persuaded of the soundness of an empiricist or positivist philosophy not easily reconcilable with their religious beliefs. They have therefore resorted to the desperate expedient of baptizing their beliefs into the principles of the new philosophy, usually by attenuating the substance of these beliefs or interpreting it in empiricist terms and disposing of the remainder in the usual linguistic fashion. Among these thinkers are those who declare themselves content to indulge in religious practices merely to satisfy religious emotions, but the clearest recent instance of the procedure in question is that of Professor Braithwaite who seems content to describe the substance of religion in ethical terms, conceived in turn in an empiricist way. *Finally* there are religious thinkers who have appreciated anew, and with much discernment, the "beyondness" or transcendence of God and who have found in the new philosophical moves a way of exhibiting the apparently incomprehensible character of essential religious claims and the pitfalls which beset the attempt to make them comprehensible in terms of what is sometimes described as crude theism; and here the new philosophy has certainly something to say which religious persons should heed, although whether it is all as new as is sometimes rather confidently thought, or invariably presented in the best way, is another question. Religion has to do with a mystery which is in some sense irreducible, although that does not prevent religion from being also articulate. This paradoxical situation in religion we forget at our peril, and philosophers who might not in other regards feel they have much to learn from the prevailing forms of empiricism, may wish to echo much which the philosophy of linguistic analysis says in displaying the peculiarly elusive character of religious claims, although whether we can walk together any distance beyond this point is quite another matter.

These various forms of the recent philosophical interest in religion are well represented in the volume under review.[1] The volume consists of a number of papers, ranging from broadcast talks to contributions to *Mind*, most of which have appeared already and been much discussed. It was an excellent notion to bring them together in their present form, and the editors are to be congratulated (in the main) on their choice and especially on their admirable arrangement of the material which brings out most effectively and pleasingly the shift of emphasis in the philosophical treatment of religion which the book represents. No one should assume that this volume gives an adequate picture of all the work that has lately been done in the philosophy of religion, but then, one takes it, the aim was to present the varieties and implications of a particular approach to religious questions. If

[1] *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*. Edited by Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre. S.C.M. Press, pp. 274. Price 21/–.

there are omissions of which one may complain, and I believe there are a few, they must consist of work which would qualify in terms of the very legitimate aims which the editors have set themselves. The layman and the professional student of religion ought thus to be very glad to have these papers between the covers of one book, partly because some of them might otherwise be overlooked and are, in any case, not easy to get hold of, and partly because the interest of the essays, including those which most invite criticism, is much enhanced by reading them together.

The collection opens with two dialogues, one composed by Professor A. N. Prior and the other by Professor J. J. C. Smart. The dialogue form is a very honoured one in philosophy and has many merits. It has also many disadvantages, most of all when tried out in a brief compass. It favours a certain inconclusiveness and reluctance to come into the open with philosophical arguments, and that perhaps accounts for its considerable popularity at present. Both these dialogues bring out well the new importance ascribed to the meaning and status of religious statements, and Professor Prior most effectively exhibits the significant affinity between recent philosophical scepticism and certain forms of transcendentalist theology. The psychoanalyst also makes his bow here in his typical role in recent philosophy, namely (to interpolate an image of our own) that of a greedy shark hovering near to devour whatever the logician seems unable to digest. Professor Smart carries the discussion farthest, and his very brief comment on the problem of freedom anticipates a later treatment of that problem in a way which illustrates well the interlocking of the studies in this volume. But both dialogues leave us more uncertain than they need of the direction in which we should eventually go. Are we to treat metaphysics entirely as consisting of questions which vanish on analysis or transform themselves into less ambiguous scientific ones? The handling of the question, "Why should there be anything at all," brief though it is, suggests that Smart would like to say a good deal more than he ventures to say. It is all most uncertain, but this tantalizing uncertainty is perhaps less out of place in these dialogues in their role of suggestive overtures to the performances that follow than would be the case if we read them singly.

We get deeper into the subject with the next contribution, again by Professor Smart, which seems to me to be one of the most valuable in the volume. It is on "The Existence of God" and has a great deal that is incisive and illuminating to say about the "traditional arguments." Teachers of the philosophy of religion ought to be much helped by having the usual objections to the arguments available in a clear and readable form to set before their pupils. But some will share my own conviction that insufficient heed is paid to the uniqueness of the idea of God, most especially when it is urged that the idea of a logically

necessary being is self-contradictory, the truth of a logically necessary proposition, the argument continues, depending always on "the relationship of concepts" and thus never extending to existence. The further suggestion to which we are eventually led, namely that, as God must be a necessary being in some sense if worship is to be accorded him, the case can be met by regarding God's existence as "a religious necessity" seems to me also most inadequate. There is, no doubt, a difference between the certainty of faith and philosophical conviction, although I for one deplore a total isolation of these, but the certainty of faith is no less cognitive on that account and makes a claim to truth which is not consistent with treating faith as logically impossible. I agree that the question 'Does God exist" may have no clear meaning for the unconverted, but this is because of something which the unconverted fails to apprehend. Professor Smart writes: "The word God gets its meaning from the part it plays in religious speech and literature, and in religious speech and literature the question of existence does not arise." Perhaps not, but this is because the certainty of God's existence is very complete in this context, not because it is senseless to affirm it—and is it in any case quite as obvious as Smart assumes that religious speech and literature do not sometimes affirm the sheer existence of God as a matter for wonder and praise? It certainly seems to me not possible at all to hold, as the writer suggests, "that the question 'Does God exist,' is not a proper question without necessarily also holding that religion and theology are nonsensical." For religion and theology would clearly be nonsensical if we could not take the belief that God exists to be a logically respectable one and capable of being affirmed as true independently of the fact that our "religious attitudes" would be "upset in a most violent way" if we entertained the possibility of its falsehood. Professor Smart seems to me to come very near the position of bewildered religious thinkers at an earlier and simpler stage of the conflict of science and religion when they clung to a "truth of the heart" side by side with an incompatible "truth of the mind."

We ring the changes on similar themes in the essays which come next in the volume, including two symposia, one launched in the pages of *Mind* by Professor J. N. Findlay, and the other published in *University* following upon a broadcast discussion initiated by Professor Antony Flew, the two being neatly linked by a paper from *Mind* on "A Religious Way of Knowing" by C. B. Martin. As these have already been discussed elsewhere by me (*Philosophical Quarterly*, April and July 1954) comment here must be brief.

Professor Findlay holds, for reasons not unlike those of Professor Smart, that the idea of God, as presupposed in attitudes of worship, is logically impossible, and he suggests that religion should be directed instead to an imaginary focus in the shape of an ever-receding ideal.

Findlay shows a fine discernment of what the attitude of worship involves, and it is not surprising that a comment made originally about Samuel Alexander should have been adapted to fit him in the observation that "he walks very humbly with his non-existent God." His position seems certainly more consistent than that of Smart. Replies to Findlay by Professor George Hughes and Mr. A. C. Rainer stress the peculiarities of the idea of God and comment on the oddity of supposing that we cannot make sense of religious reverence without presupposing a Being our very notion of which is "self-evidently absurd." Mr. Martin deals with an alleged direct experience of God, but his discussion is weakened throughout by not distinguishing sufficiently between the question of God's existence and other knowledge that may be obtained of him. Nor is it sufficiently plain how far the experience of God in question is being interpreted exclusively, and very falsely in my view, in terms of "certain sorts of emotions and feelings." It is certainly helpful to consider closely how a unique and incommunicable experience of God is to be compared with an awareness like that of colour, but Martin seems to assume too readily that an incommunicable experience makes a "psychological and not an existentialist claim." The conclusion to which the discussion leads is that "statements concerning a certain alleged religious way of knowing betray a logic extraordinarily like that of statements concerning introspection and subjective ways of knowing." It does not follow, we are told, that, because "the logic is very like," it is "just like." Much depends on this qualification and on the question how far "checking procedures" normally available to us are ruled out in the case of our knowledge of God. This paper, which is certainly suggestive, would be much more helpful if a somewhat less disjointed method of presentation had been adopted. The discussion in *University* centres on Wisdom's celebrated parable of the invisible gardener. The flowers in a clearing suggest that a gardener has been at work, but he is never seen or observed in any way. How does such an invisible, unobservable gardener differ from no gardener at all, in other words, do we not erode our religious claims so much by qualification that they become pointless? Is there anything which would count against the existence or the love of God? Several writers tried to answer this question, the two who enter the lists in this volume being Mr. R. M. Hare and Mr. Basil Mitchell, the latter suggesting that certain things may count against a doctrine without counting decisively. Much the best reply seems to me to have been made by Father Corbishley who, firstly, stressed the distinction between the belief in God's existence and other beliefs about him, and, secondly, urged that no particular feature of the world could count against the *existence* of God since He is known to exist from the existence of anything whatsoever. Trenchant observations in the

same vein were made by Illtyd Trethowan in the same sequence of papers. And here I come to one of my major complaints against the Editors, namely that neither of the writers mentioned, nor any others who share their view, are included among the contributors. The preface tells us that "the one Roman Catholic whom we approached felt unable to contribute." This presumably refers to Father Corbishley—if not, I am completely mystified by his exclusion. But even if one person failed to co-operate, it would surely have been possible to elicit a paper from one of the many Neo-Thomist writers whose work is often very closely directed to precisely the problems most prominent in this volume. I should have liked also to see included a brief but very effective attack on the verificationist treatment of Christian doctrines by W. D. Glasgow in a fairly recent number of *Mind*. There is less excuse for omissions of this kind as the papers which might have served the purpose best are very short.

We come next to a comment on the *University* discussion which I had not met before and which is outstandingly helpful. It is by Mr. I. M. Crombie, and he begins by contending that we get the "notion of God" or the "category of the divine" through a certain sense of contingency, somewhat in the manner of "natural theism." This we call belief in God, but, if I understand aright, it does not strictly include a belief in God's existence, the question of existence being, in my view, brushed aside much too lightly at the start. I should say that the sense of contingency includes a special apprehension of the being of God and I should be far less daunted than Crombie seems to be by the familiar objection that *all* existence statements are contingent; and in line with this I should deny outright that a meaning can be provided for the word God without producing a conviction of his existence, almost the reverse of Crombie's view on page 116 where he stresses the distinction between "merely possessing the category of the divine" and "active belief in God." Crombie's next step is to ask how can we be sure that the notion of God is not just "an empty aspiration," how can we know that it has application to reality. This approach as it stands seems to me to assimilate questions about God much too closely to questions about the way concepts are normally derived and thought to be exemplified, to the serious detriment of our grasp of the peculiarity of religious assertions, and I find it even more, and more seriously, questionable when the writer goes on to affirm that, while we obtain the "reference" of religious sayings, or know what it is that we are saying them about, in the way noted, we find our sanction for what is said about God, including "properly" believing that there is one, from authority. Within the authority, Crombie holds, and granted the notion of the divine, there is no unsurmountable problem of meaning, for at that stage, that is having distinguished the "reference" or the subject from the predi-

cates affirmed about him, words have their normal meaning, although in their ordinary interpretation they cannot strictly be true of God. We speak in parables, but not wholly empty or mysterious ones, for we know how to handle the parables and that in interpreting them in the light of each other we shall not be misled, because they are "authorized parables." And if this implies that, as we accept the "images which we employ" not in any ordinary way, but on authority, and have thus no way of understanding them apart from their authoritative source, we may then be said in some important sense not to know what we mean, the answer is given that this is what we must expect and that it does not matter, for "our need is not to know God, but to enter into relation with him." The parables "have communication value, although in a sense they lack descriptive value." Mr. Crombie thus finds himself able to "agree very closely with what the atheist says," but when challenged to defend his faith declares that he himself knows what his statements mean within the parable; his agnosticism is not complete, for, under attack, he "falls back upon the person of Christ, and the concrete realities of the Christian life."

Now this I find impressive and exasperating, for it seems, on the one hand, to come so very near the truth about the crucial problems for religious thought, and, on the other, to be so very mistaken. I can make little of the distinction between communication value and descriptive value; for how can we communicate except on the basis of what persons learn about one another in some way, however indirect? But it is the appeal to authority that I most deplore. There is, undoubtedly, a place for authority in religion, at many levels; but it can never be an ultimate one. Our final appeal can never be to authority. An authority must provide its credentials. We do not accept it blindly or just opt for it. And if the reply be made that the "concrete realities of the Christian life" provide the justification for what we accept on authority, this just raises our problem all over again. For what is it about these "realities" which sets them apart? On the other hand, the view that in religion we have notions and images which we obtain in ordinary human contexts but find to have "a reference" or "direction" by which they guide us beyond all finite experience, seems to me to be what we most need to stress in the face of problems such as those posed in this volume. This again, however, raises the question what authorizes or validates our selection, what sort of experiences or notions can be regarded as having significance for our relation with the transcendent which, by its very nature, we cannot know as it is in itself. The answer which I would attempt myself here would be in terms of the peculiarities of certain experiences, peculiarities in which "the sense of contingency" has special importance. It would not be proper here, or possible, to sketch

how I think this suggestion should be developed and how it can give us the particular beliefs of a faith like Christianity. But that an answer in such terms must be provided seems to me inescapable, and it is just here that the philosophy of religion seems to me to find its main and most creative task and its closest bearing on the practice of religion.

Very similar comment is invited by an instructive and lively essay on "Religion as the Inexpressible" by Mr. Thomas McPherson. He declares: "Otto travels the same road as Wittgenstein. Are we to call Otto an enemy of religion? Why not call Wittgenstein its friend?" Some really helpful points of affinity between Otto and Wittgenstein are brought out, although both seem to be pushed further for the purpose at times than they might be willing to go. But suppose we allow this, we cannot rest here. In one sense the proper attitude for religion is "retreat into silence" before the unutterable. But religion is also very articulate and some religions, such as Christianity, make very explicit claims. The hard problem is to say how these are to be vindicated. Their language may be that of parable, but which parable? And how is the parable to be understood?

At this point the volume deviates rather sharply into a somewhat different course. Professor Flew renews the more downright sceptical case against religion as normally understood and practised. Religion usually claims that its God is omnipotent and omniscient, but how, if God is altogether good, does it happen that there is evil in the world. This, as Flew is well aware, is a very old problem. His concern is with one of the main answers usually given to it, namely that evil comes about through the abuse by man of the freedom conferred on him by God. God had to create men as free, and thus possibly rebellious, creatures, if they were to be responsible beings and attain to the highest worth. Now I believe this answer is perfectly sound in substance, *so far as it goes*. The trouble about it, and about further supplementary answers too, is that there still remains a great deal of evil to be accounted for. Much evil is moral evil or the harmful consequence of deliberate wickedness. But there seems to be also appalling evil, such as seemingly pointless suffering of men and animals, which is not to be traced to this source at all. Theologians have sometimes tried desperately to treat all evil, including suffering and death, as a consequence, or even a form of sin. But they have done their case untold harm in the process, and Professor Flew has some harsh observations very much to the point to make about the desperate manœuvres of Mr. C. S. Lewis in his astonishingly cavalier treatment of great issues in *The Problem of Pain*. Lewis says that there is no such thing as a sum of pain, for "the addition of a million fellow sufferers adds no more pain," and Flew very rightly notes that this "is fantastic." But Professor Flew's main aim is to break the back of the "Free-will Defence" as such, and this he attempts to do very

boldly by urging that it would have been quite possible for God to have bestowed freedom on us and at the same time ensure that we always freely chose the right, a suggestion anticipated by one of the speakers in the opening dialogue.

Now there can be no denying the oddity of this suggestion, for, on the face of it, it seems quite contradictory to say that we can be *made* to choose the right *freely*, and I think this will be at least the first reaction of most readers. How does Flew proceed? Can he remove the apparent contradiction? To his credit it must be said that his procedure is not to shelter, as some have done, behind a view of omnipotence which sets consistency and logic entirely at naught. Flew would not wish to urge that an omnipotent being would have to be capable of making twice two five or of reversing what has actually happened. He simply denies that there is a contradiction between our conduct being caused and being free. And he defends this position by directing our attention to what he calls the paradigm cases of acting freely. I am, for example, sitting freely, or "of my own accord," at a table now, and in a short while I shall proceed, again of my own accord, to the dining-room for lunch. If I am of regular habits, much of this could be very reliably anticipated by my friends, as the citizens of Königsberg are said to have set their watches by Kant's daily walk. No one could say that Kant was compelled to take his walk. He elected to take it every day, and, in Flew's example, two people would be said to marry of their own free will although they and their friends could have anticipated the event at least from the time they announced their engagement and made their preparations. Now no one would deny that it is proper to say all this. The question is, *just what does it prove?* It proves that, in *one* sense of freedom, our freedom is consistent with our actions being caused or determined. But surely a "linguistic" philosopher ought to be peculiarly aware of the deceptiveness of language where terms like "freedom" are concerned. It is notorious how many confusions have resulted, in politics as in morals, from the variety of ways and contexts in which this term is used. I am free, in sitting at my table, in the sense that I am not physically tied to my chair, that my hand is not being moved along the page, that I am not being threatened with dire penalties if I stop writing. I am not writing under duress, but all this could be allowed and the question still remain whether, given the present circumstances and my own character and upbringing, I could have chosen to do anything other than I do. Am I free in this additional sense? The libertarian maintains that I am, although he need not hold that I am so at *all* times and in *all* regards. He holds that there are some occasions, generally taken to be occasions when questions of duty arise, when I exercise this additional freedom such that my conduct is not caused in any sense and could not, even in principle,

have been predicted. He may be wrong, but men have not argued so persistently about this "age-long" problem just because they were unaware of what Professor Flew is so generously pointing out to them, namely that there are *some* senses of freedom, and those in quite common use, where the conditions in question do not hold and the problem whether they do or not does not arise. The libertarian knows perfectly well that his being free, in some usages of the word, such as my not sitting at this table under duress, is quite consistent with determinism; he has always known this; and for that reason his case is not to be answered by merely pointing out to him certain alleged paradigm cases of our use of the word. If he is mistaken, it is for some other reason. The question which worries him is that it seems unreasonable to regard our actions as good or bad in a special moral sense, or to feel guilt and remorse about our moral wrongdoings, or to speak of obligation in any ultimate sense, if our actions are in *any* way necessitated. The "self-determinist" acknowledges this difficulty and tries to provide an answer consistent with eventual determinism. That is reasonable philosophical procedure, and there seems to be much to be said, and it has often been impressively said, on both sides of the question; but to suppose that the entire problem will straightway dissolve before the citation of paradigm cases is simply to refuse to deal philosophically with the problem—we are back in the company of Dr. Johnson.

I observe that Professor Flew regards his procedure as one "which is being confidently employed with great subtlety through many ramifications by the majority of those contemporary British philosophers who have tackled any of the puzzles about free will." Just how are we to understand this? Who are the contemporary philosophers in question? The classification must certainly exclude some writers of undeniable competence, and some of high reputation, who have dealt quite recently with the problem of freedom in an entirely different way, for example Broad, Carritt, Campbell, Mabbott, Maclagan, to say nothing of several theological writers! The unwary reader might well conclude that it is an insignificant minority who still conceive of the problem of freedom in the traditional way. But what we are entitled to expect from Professor Flew is a clear indication of how he would deal with the arguments, deployed with special force and clarity, by such writers as I have listed. It is an ill-day for philosophers when they simply ignore one another's arguments.

Let me now note the remaining contents of the volume more briefly. A broadcast dialogue between Professor Flew and Professor D. M. Mackinnon rings the changes again on the problem of our knowledge of the transcendent, the most positive suggestion (made by Mackinnon) being that the language of religion "makes possible a view of the world that is fertile and illuminating," a "posture for men

under the sun that vindicates itself." But even when this is qualified by addition of the words, "opening doors on to the unseen," this does not seem to take us very much farther philosophically, for the philosophic problem is just how do these things happen and what is the status of the claim that they do. Mr. Bernard Williams, in a particularly able and learned paper on "Tertullian's Paradox," confronts the reader peculiarly sharply with the difficulties involved in having to admit that the element of incomprehensibility cannot be wholly eliminated—for the believer or anyone else—from a religious statement. This paper sums up the main theme of the volume as a whole most effectively, and it has an emphasis of its own to make in noting the task of "gearing" religious language into other language. Mr. Williams himself is led to a sceptical conclusion but he is, like Professor Findlay, a sceptic with an uncommonly sound understanding of what religion is like. Mr. C. B. Martin returns to the attack on religion with a paper designed to exhibit the inherent contradiction in the notion of God's perfection, but he again leaves us a little uncertain of the precise way his argument goes. Mr. R. W. Hepburn, in the course of an admirable review of the recent debates about "demythologizing" notes "that Bultmann's methods and terminology tend to insulate his claims against the possibility of verification or falsification (using these words in their widest sense)." An essay by Mr. P. Nowell-Smith on "Miracles" is so very closely directed against arguments used by Sir Arnold Lunn elsewhere that I doubt whether it will hold the interest of readers not able to turn up Sir Arnold's original paper. Mr. Nowell-Smith would have done better for the purpose of this volume by steering a more independent course, notwithstanding that he seems to score heavily against his absent opponent. A paper on "Visions" by Mr. Alasdair MacIntyre tries to dispose in a very brief compass of the attempt to found religious belief on the evidence of religious experience. The writer assumes that religious experience must be understood here to consist of either feeling-states or the seeing of visions and the hearing of voices. But where is the warrant for this assumption? There are many who would certainly claim that religious experience is essentially cognitive, and those who attach importance to religious experience today usually think that it forms itself mainly within other experiences of the highest worth, for example morality. Even those who claim to have had abnormal experiences, such as seeing visions, would not as a rule ascribe the main importance to these in their total religious life or consider that they would have significance for faith on their own. One wonders what Mr. MacIntyre hopes to gain in a volume of this kind when he ridicules those who claim to have had visions of the Blessed Virgin by stressing the difficulty of identifying her—has she been questioned about conditions in Palestine in her day, have we any

evidence of what she looked like, and so forth? There may be contexts where this would be relevant, but it seems quite out of place in a work devoted to the serious discussion of religion, and I certainly hope that no reader of the volume will lay it down with the conviction that the claims to be made for religious experience have been disposed of in this paper; for they have not been effectively considered. And I deem this a most important point to stress at the close, for I am convinced that the way forward in religious thought must be found in a fresh examination of the nature of religious experience. The impasse in which we seem to find ourselves at the moment is this. Those who oppose religious claims do so on the ground of their incomprehensibility—if the claims are to be made good it must be shown what they mean. Likewise, those who uphold religion fall back, under criticism, on the essentially mysterious character of religion, its claims are "mysteries to be believed" but not to be made intelligible. We must obviously break this deadlock in some way. Part of the answer is the exhibition of how the idea of a transcendent reality can be meaningful, as involved in our sense of contingency, without being reducible to the finite realities which we understand in the normal way; and here I do not think there is much, in substance, to be added to what has already been said by outstanding thinkers, although there can be subtler appreciations of the delicate points at issue and new ways of presenting them. But granted that this can be accomplished, it is only a beginning, and it will not do at all, as some religious apologists assume, simply to wave the flag of incomprehensibility before any onslaught of our critics. For some religious statements are made at a level where they should be comprehensible, if they can be accepted at all. There is a lesson here for Catholic and Protestant thinkers alike, for both seem often to evade the challenge to think out their problems afresh and to make unavoidable adaptations and concessions, by having too ready a recourse to the mystery which is inescapable in religion. If we are to deal squarely with criticism and to present religion in ways which are consistent with our intellectual and cultural advances, we have to address ourselves afresh to the problem of how the factor of irreducible mystery in religion is related to the rest of it, how the more distinctively religious element is "geared" to the remainder, in Mr. Bernard Williams's phrase. How are the "points of intersection" found, what licenses the superimposing of a religious significance on matters independently apprehended, and in what dispositional and other ways is this distinctively religious apprehension maintained in life as a whole and renewed? These are the testing tasks for the philosophy of religion today. The discussions represented in this volume bring us effectively to these tasks, but no further. Nothing much will be gained now by just ringing the changes on the sort of themes which have been so thoroughly exploited in

recent philosophy of religion. We should attempt to move forward by considering how the particular claims which many religions, and especially Christianity, make about God's dealings with men are to be understood, and what epistemological account is to be given of them. I for one believe that success in these further more constructive tasks will only be made possible by better understanding of religious experience.

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RELIGIOUS ASSERTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

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TODAY the questions most commonly asked by philosophical critics of religion, at least in this country, relate not to the truth or falsity of religious assertions but to their meaning. To be fair to the philosophers, however, we must of course realize that very few, if any, of those who have denied "meaningfulness" to religious statements were using "meaning" in other than a technical sense. They did not mean that the sentence "God loves us" conveys nothing at all, that it is like "schwarzibarshinee." What they meant was that it *expresses* an attitude of mind but *states* nothing that can be true or false. This is often expressed by saying that these sentences have no *factual* meaning or no objective meaning. All sincerely uttered sentences express an attitude of mind, if only that of theoretical belief, but not all state anything. Questions, exclamations and commands do not, and neither, it is claimed, do religious sentences properly understood, the reason usually given for saying this being that no possible experience can establish or refute them. Of the two functions, expressing an attitude and stating a fact, it is held they fulfil only the former, or at least in so far as they make a factual assertion it is only about the experience of the speaker. A possible way of putting this would be indeed to say that they are not statements or assertions at all but merely appear to be so on a superficial view.

Now there is no doubt that a sentence which verbally appears like a statement of fact may be emotive or practical and not informative. The former is the case with most poetry. Again, if I say "I want you to go," this is a form of words which ostensibly gives information about the condition of my desires but is fundamentally an exhortation to go (practical function). It is something of this kind that is being said of religious assertions except that emotive and practical functions are here combined in a very much more complicated way than in at least my second example. Only, while in the cases I have just given the sentences were presumably not intended as information by the persons who uttered them, there can be no doubt that most religious people have always held that when speaking religiously they did assert facts. So what is meant can hardly be that religious assertions have no objective meaning in the sense that they are not intended to assert anything objective but only in the sense that they somehow fail of their intention, though not in the way in which does a factually false assertion

supposed by the asserter to be true. What is claimed is that, owing to the lack of reference to ordinary experience by which the assertions could be tested, there is nothing in the mind of the person who makes them which could *conceivably* be objectively true (except of course for any ordinary empirical propositions which have their place in a religious context). He thinks there is something more but he is mistaken, having taken what is really a subjective expression of his emotions and moral principles to be an objective assertion about a trans-empirical reality. In regard to this view of religious assertions I shall maintain both that it is groundless and that, if true, it would leave very little of value in religion.

To take the second point first, it has been suggested that what religion does is, like poetry, just to express certain more or less emotional states of mind which need have no more objective or intellectual basis than the poet's delight at kinship with nature on a sunny day or the awe he may feel at the sight of storm-capped mountains. I have been told that Wittgenstein once admitted that he would be prepared to say that God created the world but that he meant by this simply that he had a feeling of security about the course of the world. If this is a correct report, it provides an admirable example of the simpler form of the view of religion in question. But surely any such view is open to the gravest objections from the point of view of the religious man. Emotion, at least except in pathological cases and perhaps even then, requires some objective belief, true or false, about the real to support it for long, and if it exists without knowledge or a rationally founded objective belief with which it is in agreement, it is to be condemned as irrational and unfitting. The emotion of fear is irrational (though for some people psychologically inevitable) in cases where there is no reason to anticipate harm from the feared object, the emotion of admiration in cases where there is nothing worth admiring. Similarly if there is no warrant for thinking that the world is really controlled for the best, the feeling of security and peace which a religious man has can only be described as the enjoyment of a fool's paradise. It is comparable to the attitude of a student who should feel blissfully confident of getting a first when according to his teachers there was no good reason to suppose that he would even pass. That is not religion. And similarly with any other emotions which depend on religion.

It will be said indeed that religion is not merely a feeling but a much more complex mental attitude, but all mental attitudes require some objective conditions if they are to be appropriate. If we have no ground for thinking these conditions fulfilled, still more presumably if it is meaningless to suppose they could be, the attitude is unfitting as it is unfitting to rejoice at something

hateful or be angry with an inanimate thing. It might be argued on purely utilitarian grounds that it is worth having the benefits of religion for its effects in the way of increased happiness and goodness even if from an objective point of view there is no warrant for it and the attitude involved is therefore in a certain respect unfitting, but it is certainly an essential part of religion to regard the attitudes it inculcates as intrinsically and supremely fitting. According to all highly developed religions it is very evil to worship what is not worthy of worship. Yet if there is thought to be no objective justification for belief in God all worship of God becomes idolatry. Nor is it easy to see how a religious attitude could long survive the conviction that reality is not such as to warrant it.

But besides the emotional and the intellectual there is the conative practical side, and it has been held that religion can be reduced mainly to this. The clearest and, at the moment at least, the most familiar exposition of this view is provided by Professor R. B. Braithwaite in *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief*,[1] and I deal with this as a straightforward, clear, brief exposition with which a number of you will be already familiar. Braithwaite maintains that religious assertions are primarily declarations of adherence to a policy of action, declarations of commitment to a way of life. I agree that this brings one nearer to the heart of religion than any view which discusses it primarily in terms of emotional attitudes and even that such commitment to a way of life is the most important feature of religion, but it still seems to me that one must urge against this view the same type of argument as I used against the emotional interpretation of religion. For just as an emotion is irrational and unfitting unless objectively founded, so is a policy of action wrong unless objectively justified. In saying this I am not just asserting the "objective" theory of ethics. I hold such a theory, but this is not the topic for discussion here. What I mean is that any theory of ethics, whether objective or not, must recognize that there are certain factual conditions which make us say something is good and something else bad, one act right and another wrong, and justify these statements in whatever sense of justification is admitted by one's ethical philosophy, while in their absence the ethical judgments become wrong in whatever sense an ethical judgment can be so. Thus even on a thoroughly subjective theory of ethics, if a person has condemned A because he thought A killed B and then finds that A did not even try to do so, he must withdraw his condemnation of A. This may or may not involve saying that A's action or state of mind has not, while on the former view it had, the non-natural quality of badness, but at least it must

[1] The Ninth Arthur Stanley Eddington Memorial Lecture, Cambridge University Press, 1955.

be admitted that whether one ethical judgment is to be preferred to another or not depends on the actual situation and therefore on objective facts, including under this heading facts about the states of mind of the persons concerned. Braithwaite himself says, quoting Hare, that "an ultimate decision to accept a way of life 'far from being arbitrary . . . would be the most well-founded of decisions because it would be based upon a consideration of everything upon which it could possibly be founded.' "[1] This implies that on his view ethical decisions are in this sense objectively founded: if so, religion as an ethical policy should be objectively founded, and I shall contend that the ways in which religion is commonly used to give reinforcement to ethics all presuppose that religion is objectively founded.

In what way can religion function as a basis of ethical policy on Braithwaite's view? For him ethical and religious assertions are both declarations of behaviour policy, and the fundamental difference between them is that in religion behaviour policies are associated with the thinking of certain "stories."[2] That these stories help many people to carry out their ethical policy is a matter, he claims, of empirical fact, and the different religions are distinguished chiefly by the different stories used to help their adherents to live a good life. He insists that to be a Christian one must entertain (bear in mind) the Christian stories but that one need not believe them to be true, and that even without this belief they can have their ethical effect.

Now we need not deny that "stories," even if not accepted as true, may still psychologically help a man to lead a good ethical life, but what I do deny is that they can provide a reason (or additional reason) for living ethically, and I shall further insist that by far the greater part of any efficacy they have depends on an objective grounding of some kind. It seems to me that the stories fall into two main classes, not always sharply separable (especially in Christianity). First, there are stories of noble deeds done by human beings and, more generally, stories of human actions which in various ways illustrate ethical laws. The efficacy of these is not necessarily impaired or at least much impaired if they are not thought to be a correct account of actual happenings. They are often, as in the parables, not even put forward as such. But in two ways the stories, if apposite at all, will be objectively founded, and their value depends largely on that. (*a*) It does not matter greatly whether any particular such story is true or false, but if it were thought that a particular height of e.g. fortitude or unselfish love illustrated in a story had never been attained by any human being, this would lessen the influence of the story on anybody except a person who could aspire

[1] op. cit., p. 34, Hare, *Language of Morals*, p. 69.

[2] The term "stories" is preferred by Braithwaite as "neutral," implying neither that the story is believed nor that it is disbelieved (p. 26).

to rise altogether above the level of other men. (*b*) Quite fictitious stories may exercise a great ethical influence because through a fictitious medium they bring out the nature of certain factors present in real life.[1] The most potent way of getting a person to do right is to make him love goodness when he sees it, and a man of great literary power may make a person see and love goodness when he would not otherwise have seen or loved it. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, with badness. But then, in so far as the influence is ethically satisfactory, it is effected by bringing out the real factual nature of certain qualities, so that we, seeing them to be what they really are, see them to be good (or bad). Only that is a point that can appeal to the thorough secularist as much as to the most devout believer. So far we are wholly in the realm of ethics without any specific reference to religion.

Secondly, there are stories about God. To give a complete account one would have also to deal with intermediate cases, but I do not think that these raise any additional points of principle. Now it can hardly be doubted that a religious person may be very much helped to lead a better life by stories about God. He may be prompted to be much more careful than he otherwise would be as to what he does and even what he thinks by thinking of God as knowing everything he does and thinks. He may refrain from sins he would otherwise have committed because he feels they would offend God and he is unwilling to offend a being whom he loves and regards as loving him. He may be encouraged to persevere courageously through adversity because he believes that God will see that everything works out for good in the end or even because he believes it to be God's will, though this story can be used in a less edifying fashion. He may be more disposed to be charitable and forgiving to other men because he thinks of them as all God's children and so his brothers and sisters. At a lower level he may try more to do right and avoid doing wrong because he thinks he will be rewarded or punished by God according to what he does, though the appeal to this motive is not without its moral disadvantages. But why do these stories help? Is it not only or mainly because they are regarded as objectively true or at least as symbolizing an objective truth? Two accounts may be given here. It may be said (and this is certainly true, though it is not the whole truth) that what a person who speaks like this is doing is telling the stories to himself and others as additional *reasons* for doing his duty over and above those which a

[1] Incidentally when Braithwaite (p. 27) cites the *Pilgrim's Progress* as an example of a work of fiction which has had a great religious influence, he seems to be forgetting that the work was admittedly intended as an allegory, i.e. it claims to be picturing by fictitious characters just what the author regards as objectively true, as with Christ's parables.

secularist has. If we believe in ethics, there is no doubt at all that a secularist has also good reason for doing his duty, and indeed if we see something to be our duty this ought to be sufficient without other reasons to make us do it. But when doing one's duty is hard, additional reasons why a man should do it may be badly needed to increase the likelihood of his doing it and the religious man may by his stories supply these. A story, however, certainly cannot provide a good reason for doing anything unless the story is true. If it is not true, no conclusions as to action can be drawn from it whatever. If I believe that I shall hurt somebody I love by doing A, this is a reason against doing it, but if I now discover that I shall not hurt him in the least, the reason just disappears and it is no use repeating the story as a fiction. Similarly surely with the stories about God. Secondly, it may, however, be urged that to talk in terms of reasons for acting rightly is an inadequate account of the influence of religion, though true as far as it goes. It may be not so much that the man who has acquired an effective religion is given new reasons for doing right but that his whole emotional attitude to life is altered by religion so that what would have been impossible or very difficult for him before is now relatively easy. This brings us back to the emotional aspect of religion again, though only as a means to the ethical, and I can only repeat what I have said before that, unless certain religious propositions of a metaphysical kind are objectively true, the religious emotions felt in contemplating the universe are totally unfitting to their object and it is difficult to see how they could long survive the thorough conviction that these propositions could not possibly be true. I do not wish to maintain that the function of religion is simply to provide extra reasons for doing one's duty. If its object is real, it is also an end in itself and the highest kind of life is impossible without it, but I do not see how the entertaining of the idea of God by a person who believes that God could not possibly exist objectively could be the foundation of these values. A man may be at peace because he believes he is in the hands of God, but he will not be at peace because he imagines a God who he believes could not possibly exist. The same I should have thought applies to any other values besides peace that can be obtained from religion.

I have argued that the stories, unless true, provide no reason for any course of action based on them. But it would be objected by some philosophers, of whom I much fear Braithwaite is one, that "reasons" in ethics does not mean "arguments to justify a certain course" but only "considerations which in fact make people inclined to act in a certain way." It may then be claimed that as an empirical fact the stories do have this effect even when not believed and there is no more to be said on the matter. But how is this known? It would have to be a purely empirical question, and

nobody can claim that there are sufficient data for giving even a probable answer to it. For the people who use the stories habitually and do not believe them are as yet far too rare for a generalization to be possible. Even if it can be shown empirically that people who think habitually in terms of the stories are on the average better than people who do not, this will not help, for the vast majority of the people who have thought in terms of the stories up to the present have believed them to be true either literally or at least symbolically and so their conduct can provide no evidence that these are ethically efficacious when not believed. Braithwaite would say that he is ethically benefited himself, but different people may be benefited by different psychological techniques, and there is no evidence that his medicine is helpful at least to more than a very small minority. The universal claim of religion has disappeared.

Further, even if it should turn out empirically that religious stories could be very helpful to many people who intellectually repudiated their truth this might easily be explained in two ways. (1) Religious stories, like many secular stories, commonly depict ethical actions of an exalted kind and so focus one's attention on an ideal. (2) It is not true that a person must either believe all the time or not believe all the time, and I suggest that, in so far as a person who denies that he believes in these stories is helped by them otherwise than in the purely ethical way just mentioned, it may be because, when he thinks of them in a religious way, he is really believing them "at the bottom of his heart" or at least half-believing them, though at other times he can quite honestly and correctly say that he does not believe them. The effect on his emotions and actions produced by the stories at the times he believed them might persist even at times when he explicitly disbelieved them, as it admittedly can at times when he is not explicitly thinking of them.

We must not assume that all symbolic use of religious statements is of the kind Braithwaite has in mind when he talks about stories. He quotes a report of the Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England as supporting the symbolic use of religious language,[1] but the reason given in the quotation is that the statements are "pictorial expressions of spiritual truths," not that they are ethically effective without expressing any truth. For all of us expressions which are not taken to be literally true can be of value as symbolizing some truth which we cannot express at all or realize vividly enough without the help of symbols, but this is not to say that the symbolical expressions can be profitably used without caring or reflecting whether they are true or false as regards their ultimate meaning, though this may be the case as regards their literal meaning.

The view of religion I have criticized would destroy any universal

[1] op. cit., p. 28.

claim of religion on all men, and make it merely a psychological technique for benefiting some; it would deprive the religious man of the comfort, happiness, serenity, incentive which come from believing that things are ultimately ordered for the best; it would deprive him of the conviction that he was in touch with the fundamental nature of reality when he was at his best, and it would make the experience of those who are convinced they are an illusion. I cannot see that it would, if carried out logically, leave much of religion that was worth having at all. Yet, if the arguments commonly used by the school of philosophers to which Braithwaite belongs are valid, he can only be congratulated on the courage and skill with which he has carried out the desperate salvage operation needed to recover a small fraction of what the sceptics have destroyed. However, it does not seem to me that there is the slightest need for the salvage operation, for I do not think that any good arguments at all have been produced for saying that religious assertions have no factual meaning. I do not, of course, think there are no difficulties about them or that their justification is a simple matter; what I do say is that there is no case at all for ruling them out *en masse* as devoid of factual meaning and so incapable on principle of being true. The remainder of this lecture will be devoted to trying to show this to be so.

A word is necessary first about the meaning of "factual." The term "facts" is by modern philosophers commonly limited to empirical facts such as could be the object of observation and natural science, and in that sense the existence of God is not a fact. This is not, however, the usual meaning of the word outside the books and lectures of these philosophers. The proposition that nothing can exist except the type of object we know in science and ordinary sense-experience is certainly not known to be true, and if other things do exist there will certainly be facts about them (in a well-recognised sense of "fact"). The metaphysician who claims to have discovered something about them may therefore sensibly claim that he is giving "factual information," though not about the empirical facts of ordinary life. The modern philosophers I am criticizing are those who have dismissed this claim as on principle meaningless.

Arguments to the effect that religious assertions cannot have factual meaning have commonly been based on the verification principle. According to this a sentence can only have factual meaning, i.e. meaning of a kind which admits of its being informative, if it is capable in principle of verification by sense-experience, and it seems plain that specifically religious sentences are not so capable. If so it follows at once that they have no factual meaning. The verification principle is however itself in by no means such a flourishing condition

as it was twenty years ago, even among the philosophers who are sympathetic to this way of thinking. As has been repeatedly pointed out, even the most respectable scientific propositions are not capable of direct verification by sense-experience, and the principle, if carried out strictly, would result in the denial of all natural laws and the reduction of the world to one's own sense-data, surely a *reductio ad absurdum*. Further, the verification principle is itself not verifiable. The reply is made that it is not a factual statement and therefore does not on its own terms need verification, but certainly if it is to be used as a premiss for any conclusion it must need some justification. It is not claimed that it is self-evident, and it is most difficult to see what the justification could be. In fact the principle is now commonly defended rather as a methodological assumption than as a true proposition, but a method cannot be regarded as a premiss to prove anything. If the verification principle is to be used to prove that religious assertions cannot be true, it must be itself true, as must any premiss if it is to justify a conclusion.

In order to see how the verification principle is used as an argument against the view that religious assertions can have factual meaning, I shall again fall back on Braithwaite's book as presenting the argument clearly and simply.[1] He divides statements into three classes according to their method of verification and then denies that religious statements can properly be included in any of the three. From this he concludes that, though they have an important function, they can have no factual meaning, and there is no doubt that his argument would be accepted in general by a great many other contemporary philosophers. While I realize that we cannot just identify religion with belief in God, it will be most convenient to discuss this question, as Braithwaite does, in terms of evidence for or against the existence of God.

(1) The first of the three classes into which statements are divided consists of those which are testable by direct observation, by sense-experience. Obviously we cannot justify religious statements in this simple fashion and so I shall not go further into this class of statements.

(2) The second class is that consisting of explanatory hypotheses. These need not be directly verifiable by a single sense-experience and may introduce concepts which are validated only by the fact that they serve to explain and predict experiences without themselves standing for anything observable. Now propositions introducing God have no doubt been put forward as providing an explanation of our experience and so far they bear a resemblance to scientific hypotheses. But Braithwaite argues that, if the belief in God is to be like a scientific hypothesis, there must be certain possible experiences which, if they occurred, would constitute a refutation

[1] p. 4 ff.

of it, yet the religious man will insist that we ought to hold on to our faith whatever happens. But it may well be replied that, if the cosmic process as a whole through its entire duration could be known to be of a certain character, this would really constitute a refutation of the belief in God, only that it is of such a kind cannot be known by us since, however bad the part which we experience here and now may be, it is always possible that later parts will redeem the badness (either for us if we survive bodily death or at least for humanity as a whole). Provided the belief in God is justified as things stand, it might then be justifiable to say that we should hold to the faith whatever happened, simply because nothing that could happen in the very limited part of the whole in space and time which we can know could constitute a refutation of the existence of God. But I do not see that the religious believer, unless he thinks that God's existence can be known intuitively with certainty or proved quite conclusively *a priori*, need mind admitting that, if certain empirical conditions had been fulfilled up to the present, this would have made the belief in an omnipotent good God unreasonable. Suppose everybody in the world were in intense pain all the time, and suppose nobody ever helped anybody else or did anything at all because they thought it their duty, but everybody maliciously desired that everybody else except himself should continue to be in pain, then I think *this* belief would be unreasonable, whether it is reasonable as things are or not. But what precise degree of evil and what diminution in the amount of good would make the belief unreasonable if it is now reasonable, it might still be impossible to specify. The situation is not so totally different from that of certain scientific hypotheses as one might think. For many hypotheses in science are justified as the explanation of a whole extremely complex set of facts, and it would be impossible, I imagine, to obtain an agreed account as to precisely how much evidence to the contrary would require the abandonment of the hypothesis.

(3) We now turn to *a priori* arguments. I accept the view mentioned in this connection by Braithwaite that a logically necessary proposition cannot assert existence, but of the arguments for God only the so-called ontological proof is committed to claiming that it can. The ontological argument I certainly reject, but in doing so I am in the company of very many, perhaps the majority of, metaphysical theologians, including St. Thomas himself. The cosmological argument is not purely *a priori* but has an empirical premiss, though a very general one, namely that something exists, and though it implies that in one sense God's existence is necessary, it does not like the ontological argument imply that there would be a formal logical contradiction in denying God. It does not in the least follow because they cannot prove existential propositions without the help

of an empirical premiss that therefore *a priori* arguments cannot give new information not included in their premises. This is often asserted,[1] but I do not see how it can be reconciled with even such a fact as that we can infer the height of a mountain by mathematics from the distance between the foot of the mountain and a given point and the angle of projection from that point of the summit. I do not see how scientific inferences of this kind can be reconciled with the view now commonly held that the necessity of *a priori* propositions and arguments is dependent on the way in which we use language any more than can the *a priori* arguments of philosophical theology. I therefore do not see that modern logic has refuted in principle the possibility even of a logically certain demonstration of the existence of God provided one of the premises for the demonstration is empirical. However, in common with most philosophers today, religious and otherwise, I do not myself think that this is the sort of thing that could be logically proved, even with the help of an empirical premiss.

I do think, however, that the threefold classification given is far from constituting an exhaustive classification of the ways of testing and establishing propositions. For one thing the classification does not cover ethical propositions, but I shall not go into that now, though it should be noted that those religious assertions which are value judgments such as that God is good can only be objective if ethical judgments are so, as I believe they are. Secondly, a synthesis is possible of the second and third method of proof. *A priori* arguments give certainty in mathematics because we can, either immediately or after a process of checking, get quite clear as to the argument, but this is not the case with philosophical arguments (whether metaphysical or non-metaphysical). Philosophical arguments depend on concepts in regard to which the course of controversy has shown that it is impossible or at least has so far proved impossible for the human mind to become so completely clear as to arrive at universally agreed conclusions as in mathematics. But an argument may not give certainty and yet support a conclusion strongly. So in the absence of certainty the two methods may be used to confirm each other. A metaphysical theory might be vindicated *both* as an explanation of our experience and also as rendered probable by various *a priori* lines of argument emanating from our experience.

There remains the claim that in some way men can have intuitive knowledge of God, intuitive at least in the sense of not being the result wholly of an inference of any kind. It has been argued that this is impossible because immediate awareness can only tell us

[1] Braithwaite does not base his argument on this, but attacks on metaphysics have certainly been based on it.

that we have a certain experience, not that anything objective exists beyond our experience. But this surely begs the question. How can we know that it is not possible to be aware of the existence of God otherwise than by inference or by sense-experience? The claim is not that people have some peculiar kind of sensation or emotion when they are aware of God or that they are entitled to infer the existence of God from this peculiar feeling, which would surely be a very weak inference, but that they have some kind of experience not adequately describable as mere sensation or emotion which makes them realize the presence of God. This may not be so, but how can we be entitled to exclude it *a priori* as a possibility? It is argued that "an experience of a distinctively mental kind cannot of itself yield us any information about anything other than the experience,"[1] but if we are going to argue in that way should we not have to argue equally that no experience of knowing, being an experience of ours, could ever tell us anything about what is not an experience of ours? It is from the nature of the case not possible to give an argument to show that people have knowledge or veridical cognition of God not based on argument, but how can we possibly prove that they have not?

In general all arguments from the theory of knowledge against the objective validity of religious belief seem to me to suffer from the following weakness. We have no way of proving *a priori* what sort of things we can and what we cannot know. And the same applies to "rational belief." We can then only arrive at such epistemological generalizations by induction. But if we say—All instances of knowledge and rational belief have characteristic *c*, knowledge of or rational belief in God would not have characteristic *c*, therefore there can be no knowledge of or rational belief in God—this begs the question. For unless the propositions in question have already been shown to be objects neither of knowledge nor of rational belief, we do not know that the characteristic *c* is possessed by all knowledge and rational belief. It may now be urged—and this is the only argument left—that at any rate all other kinds of knowledge and rational belief have characteristic *c* and therefore probably all do, but this is a very weak argument. It is not in the least to be expected that knowledge of, or rational belief in, God if it occurs will be very like other kinds of knowledge or rational belief. There are enormous differences between different kinds of non-theological knowledge, e.g. between mathematics and knowledge by sense-perception, and God is *ex hypothesi* so very different from all finite existents that we should antecedently expect that the way in which men know of God is very different also. And in fact it is not only

[1] A. MacIntyre in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, ed. Flew and MacIntyre, p. 256.

admitted, but very much emphasized by religious people that the knowledge of God is quite different from all other kinds of knowledge, though of course there are analogies between it and some of them.

Religious assertions have been denied objectivity on the ground that, if they had it, they would have to be knowable and testable in certain ways, i.e. they must either be verifiable by sense-experience directly or they must be scientific propositions or they must depend on language. But the proposition that these are the only ways of knowing or testing propositions is one that itself can certainly not be established either by sense-experience or as a scientific hypothesis or by appeal to linguistic usage. (Theological propositions certainly function verbally like other propositions, and it is perfectly in accord with ordinary linguistic usage to speak of them as true or false.) It has been urged in reply to this that a proposition which lays down the rules about testing propositions is not itself subject to the same rules as the propositions tested, but still a philosopher cannot assert propositions without justification and it remains a question how on earth this proposition is to be justified. Religious believers are commonly accused of dogmatism by their opponents, but here the boot is on the other foot, it is the assailant of the objectivity of religion who seems to be the dogmatist because he asserts *a priori* that propositions can only be known in certain ways and denies that religious statements express propositions because they cannot be known in these ways.

There remains the most plausible or the least unplausible argument used by the type of critic I have been discussing against the meaningfulness of religious assertions in so far as they are metaphysical. It is urged that such assertions can have no factual meaning because the terms they use are either themselves drawn from, or are at least defined in terms drawn from, contexts of ordinary life and therefore lose their meaning in the very different context in which they are placed by the metaphysician. Thus it is said that the term "intelligence" has in ordinary life a precise meaning which can be understood in terms of human action and conversation but that it loses its meaning when applied to a disembodied spirit or to a being so much above us as God. But such an argument does not show that we can attach no meaning to "God," only that we cannot attach such a clear and definite meaning as we can to the terms applicable to human beings. And what theologians would deny that we have a much less adequate idea of God than of a human being!

We may thus confidently reject the arguments which have been recently brought to show that theological assertions can have no objective meaning. It is another and more difficult question whether or how far we can justify them as true.

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THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

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"NATURAL theology" is generally used as the name of a study which seeks to "get at religious truth" by the use of man's reasoning powers, and not to expound revelation. But I want to limit its application to part of this field. By natural theology I mean here a study which seeks to "get at religious truth" by an *empirical* examination of things, and not by "pure reason." It is a (would-be) "scientific" theology. An example of a natural theologian in this sense would be, I suppose, the author of any one of the Bridgewater Treatises, or Paley, or F. R. Tennant. Perhaps I might have called this kind of theology "empirical theology" (or "empiricist theology"); but I do not want to invent new terms more than I have to.

"Rationalistic theology" I want to use as the name of the rest of what is commonly called natural theology. By "rationalistic theology" I mean the study that seeks to "get at religious truth" by the use of "pure reason." Examples are easily found in the Scholastic and Neo-scholastic tradition and among Hegelians. "Rational theology" is an expression sometimes met with, but I prefer "rationalistic theology" because I think "rational theology" is sometimes used as a synonym of "natural theology" in the wider sense that I am here distinguishing within.

Now I must say why I think these distinctions worth making. My point is that in philosophy of religion, as elsewhere, there have been empiricists and rationalists. Descartes, a rationalist, wrote rationalistic theology. Hume, an empiricist, wrote natural theology. Descartes regards the Ontological Argument as supreme among the so-called proofs of the existence of God. Hume gives pride of place to the Argument from Design. The Ontological Argument belongs to rationalistic theology; the Argument from Design to natural theology. Descartes was so thorough-going a rationalist, and Hume so thorough-going an empiricist, that perhaps neither of them altogether realized quite how much his theology was coloured by his whole way of thinking.

Kant clearly saw the distinction between the natural and the rationalistic way in theology, but rejected both as unsound. Since Kant, I think, the distinction has become blurred again;[1] it is not always seen that there can be these two kinds of approach to theology by philosophers. It would be a pity if this distinction were lost sight

[1] Not by everybody, of course; the distinction is clearly drawn by Tennant in *Philosophical Theology* and is adopted by Professor Farmer in his Gifford Lectures *Revelation and Religion* (London 1954).

of. In particular, I think the empirical kind of theology (natural theology) should be given credit for at least the attempt at being empirical, and should not be dismissed as obviously fallacious because "rationalistic." Rationalistic is just what it is not. The empirical strand in theology deserves to be separated out and examined. It may prove to be a longer and a stronger thread than is sometimes thought. But this is a much larger task than the one I have set myself here.

The limited task that I have set myself is that of making a few remarks on one important thing in natural theology—the theistic proof called the Argument from Design.

The Argument from Design is the argument from observed order in the universe to the hypothesis of a supreme orderer. Note the word "hypothesis." This is an empirical and would-be scientific argument (or so I want to take it). It is not a *demonstration* of the existence of an orderer. The natural theologian is trying to be a sort of scientist, and he, like the scientist, can aim at no more than hypotheses. The natural theologian, if he is wise, will not say: This argument *proves* that God exists. He will say: This is an argument in which we invoke the hypothesis of a supreme being in order to account for certain observations we make of the world.

Let me now comment on some of the chief objections that have been made to the Argument from Design.

It is objected that the Argument from Design, if it proves anything, proves only a cause proportional to the effect; that is to say, a "finite orderer," not an "infinite orderer," and certainly not the Christian God.[1]

This shows the Argument not to prove all that it has by some been thought to prove: but then it ought never to have been thought to prove what by some it has been thought to prove. It cannot prove, and should not have been expected to prove, an infinite orderer or the Christian God. (Or to *prove* anything.)

Another objection. The ordering principle (or principles) may be *in us*. Perhaps a "Kantian" view of things is right. At any rate, a Kantian hypothesis is as good as that of a divine orderer, and accounts for observed order equally well.

This objection can be regarded as only a rival hypothesis; and we may not know how to choose between it and the deistic hypothesis. In a way, of course, the deistic hypothesis is simpler than the Kantian. According to the deistic hypothesis, there is only one orderer, and we are (presumably) passive spectators of what he orders. According to the Kantian view, however, there are millions of orderers—for

[1] "If the cause be known only by the effect, we never ought to ascribe to it any qualities, beyond what are precisely requisite to produce the effect." Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Selby-Bigge's edition, p. 136.

each man is his own orderer—and how does it come about that they all order things in a similar way, as they seem to do?

From another point of view this second objection can be seen to be more than just a rival hypothesis. This "Kantian" view brings out an important truth that doesn't obviously appear in the deistic hypothesis. It helps us to see that unless the universe were ordered we could not observe it (what would it be to observe a completely "disordered" universe?); the Kantian hypothesis makes this point paradoxically by saying that but for us the universe would not be ordered. To have experiences at all is to have "ordered" experiences; what would it be like to have *dis*ordered (completely disordered) experiences? There is something odd about the sound of "disordered experience" (or, perhaps better, "unordered experience").

Yet another objection. There may be a principle of order in things themselves. What order there is may not have been imposed from outside by a deity, but may be inherent in things themselves.[1] Most simply: things may just be ordered. (Or, better, may just be orderly: to say "may just be ordered" slightly implies an orderer.)

This seems mainly to be only a rival hypothesis. It carries, however, the germ of the really decisive objection to the deistic hypothesis: and this decisive objection I shall discuss later.

There is another strong objection to the Argument from Design which consists in questioning the whole assumption of the argument, i.e. that the universe exhibits order. The universe, says this objection, does not exhibit order. In its strongest form it might state that the universe exhibits chaos. (This, however, could then be used as a new argument—the Argument from Chaos—to the probable existence of a casual and untidy deity. If the objection were put in a milder form, viz. that the universe exhibits both order and chaos, it would not dispose of the Argument from Design, although it might make us admit two deities, one of whom carefully builds up his blocks in an ordered pattern, only for the other to knock them down again.)

Supporters of the Argument from Design have, of course, tried to demonstrate in detail the ordered nature of the universe. Hume's Cleanthes,[2] speaking of sceptics' doubt about theological and religious matters, says: "Why must conclusions of this nature be alone rejected on the general presumption of the insufficiency of human reason, without any particular discussion of the evidence?" Hume's successors—e.g. Paley, and the authors of the Bridgewater Treatises —have made very particular discussion of the evidence. But I

[1] Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, Kemp Smith's edition, p. 201. The view that there is "a principle of order" in things is not the same as the naïve view that things "just are" ordered. But I have found it convenient to treat them here as if they were the same.

[2] *Dialogues*, p.169.

cannot think, after looking through their interminable—and dated—astronomical, anatomical and other information, that that kind of detail helps the Argument from Design very much. Either the universe exhibits order or it does not. Obviously, no-one can ever examine everything in the universe to find out whether it shows signs of order. (Hume, of course, has hit the nail on at least one side of its head in what he implies in the complaint he has put into Cleanthes's mouth. "Particular discussion of the evidence" is not what is needed to settle the question whether there is a supreme orderer, but a particularly logical discussion of what "evidence" *means* here.)

The fifth, and last, objection is this. Hume objects[1] that there is one great flaw in the argument.

> In a word, I much doubt whether it be possible for a cause to be known only by its effect (as you have all along supposed) or to be of so singular and particular a nature as to have no parallel and no similarity with any other cause or object, that has ever fallen under our observation. It is only when two *species* of objects are found to be constantly conjoined, that we can infer the one from the other; and were an effect presented, which was entirely singular, and could not be comprehended under any known *species*, I do not see, that we could form any conjecture or inference at all concerning its cause. If experience and observation and analogy be, indeed, the only guides which we can reasonably follow in inferences of this nature; both the effect and cause must bear a similarity and resemblance to other effects and causes, which we know, and which we have found, in many instances, to be conjoined with each other. I leave it to your own reflection to pursue the consequences of this principle. I shall just observe, that, as the antagonists of Epicurus always suppose the universe, an effect quite singular and unparalleled, to be the proof of a Deity, a cause no less singular and unparalleled; your reasonings, upon that supposition, seem, at least, to merit our attention.[2]

This objection hinges on the nature of argument by analogy. Hume holds that the Argument from Design, while purporting to be an argument by analogy, lacks one of the essentials of arguments by analogy. Arguments by analogy are only possible where we have *species*. Because one thing resembles another in certain respects we argue that it may, or that it probably does, resemble it in other respects. In an argument of this kind we are dealing with things that are members of a class. Because all the persons with whom we are acquainted who took firsts in Greats have tended to have intelligence above the average, we expect that Smith, to whom we are to be introduced tomorrow and about whom we have been told nothing beyond the fact that he took a first in Greats, will prove to have intelligence above the average. This is an argument by analogy, because in it we are clearly comparing Smith with the members

[1] *Enquiry*, xi; *Dialogues*, Part ii.
[2] *Enquiry*, p. 148.

of the species or class consisting of the (other) persons *known to us* who took firsts in Greats. But, Hume would say, in the Argument from Design we are not dealing with a species or class. In the Argument from Design we begin with the universe as a whole and argue to the possibility of its having had a maker. But this is not argument by analogy. It would only be argument by analogy if it involved comparing this universe with other universes with which we are acquainted and which we know to have had makers. But clearly this is not what we are doing in the Argument from Design, nor could we ever use the Argument in this way, for by "universe" we mean everything that is, and *ex hypothesi* there can be no species or class of universes with the other members of which we may compare *the* universe.

I have a number of comments to make on this.

Hume says that the Argument from Design is invalid as an argument by analogy. One reaction to this would be to deny that the Argument from Design is an argument by analogy. This would be heroic but difficult to justify. And I do not think it would be a profitable line for the natural theologian to follow. It seems reasonable to agree that the Argument from Design is intended to be an argument by analogy.

There seem then to be two courses open to the natural theologian. He may accept Hume's view of argument by analogy, but deny that the Argument from Design is invalid on that view. Alternatively, he may question Hume's view of argument by analogy, and try to show that although the Argument from Design would be invalid on Hume's principles it is valid on another, truer, view of the nature of argument by analogy.

Is Hume right in thinking that in the Argument from Design we attempt to argue from the universe *as a whole* (i.e. from the universe considered as a "singular and unparalleled" effect) to the Deity (i.e. to the Deity considered as a "singular and unparalleled" cause)? If he is right, then certainly there is no question of comparison with other "universes" and, on Hume's principles, the argument, as an argument by analogy, breaks down. But did Paley, and the other writers who have made such use of the Argument from Design, intend their argument to be an argument from the universe as a whole? (They certainly intended it as an argument *to* the universe as a whole, but that is a different thing.) In any case, even if they had used the Argument in the way that Hume is attacking, one can say that they were using it wrongly. Let us consider just what the natural theologian does when he makes use of the Argument from Design.

The natural theologian may argue in either of two ways. He may observe signs of order in particular parts of the universe; argue, by

analogy, that unobserved parts of the universe probably exhibit order also; and then argue that the universe as a whole probably had a maker (by analogy again—this time by analogy with things like watches). This is the way Hume thinks the natural theologian proceeds.

Or the natural theologian may observe signs of order in particular parts of the universe, and may compare these several ordered parts of the universe with particular manufactured things like watches and motor cars, and conclude that as the latter class of things had makers, so the former class of things probably had makers. This second method is surely the method that will be followed by any natural theologian who would like to claim his study to be scientific. What right has he to speak about "the universe as a whole"? He knows nothing of the universe as a whole. He is entitled only to speak about parts of the universe, those parts of which he has experience.

If the natural theologian is to follow this second method he escapes Hume's objection. He is not dealing with the universe considered as a "singular and unparalleled" effect. He is dealing with the solar system and with the Galaxy, and with other parts of the universe. Each in turn suggests the idea of a maker. (There is then the difficulty that he may find himself with too many deities; but perhaps he may be able to call in other arguments to reduce their number to one; e.g. he may argue that all these things can be observed to "work in with" each other, and from this to the possibility of a *supreme* maker or orderer.) If this way of arguing sounds artificial, it is probably because natural theologians (like rationalistic theologians) are known to have been men who have looked for arguments to support what they believed anyway. But I am imagining here for the most part a natural theologian who does not begin by beliveing in God; though it is likely that no such creature exists.[1]

I do not think that Hume is right in saying that the Argument from Design is not an argument by analogy. Perhaps he ought to have suggested that it is a bad argument by analogy. One expects analogies to break down somewhere: they would not be analogies if they did not; they would be identities. This one seems to break down in at least three places, and they are rather important places. However, two of the breakdowns can be mended.

[1] It is, incidentally, unfair to criticize the natural theologian (or the rationalistic theologian) for purporting to prove by argument what he already believes by faith. What is wrong with this? He is not trying to prove God's existence to himself; he is trying to prove it for other people; though it may well be that, as a practical point, such a "proof" is only likely to seem cogent to someone who shares, though it may be in only the vaguest way, his faith. Mention of vagueness prompts me to say that I think the value of the "proofs" lies ultimately in the help they afford to us towards getting clear the *idea* of God.

The differences between God and the maker of, say, a watch, are that (i) God is supposed to have *created* the material with which he works, while the watch-maker uses what is already there; (ii) God *lays down* laws of nature, the watch-maker exploits already existing laws of nature; (iii) the watch-maker has a *purpose* in making watches: what purpose has God in making (or in ordering) the universe?

The third difference is disposed of if Christianity is invoked, but in natural theology we are not supposed to do this. However, it should not be difficult to think of some purpose, apart from Christianity. The first, though not the second, is perhaps disposed of if God is considered merely as orderer and not as creator; but I am not sure that to regard him thus would satisfy the natural theologian; however, he would be within his rights as a would-be scientist in refusing to consider the question of creation. The second difference is the most serious, and would be hard to explain away.

I have discussed the Argument from Design, and have listed some of the objections that have been brought against it. I want now to say more about, not the Argument itself, but the proposition that is arrived at by the use of the Argument from Design. This is the proposition that I have already been calling the deistic hypothesis. It is the proposition: There is a supreme orderer, who has arranged the universe in an ordered way.

Let us remember that we are taking the natural theologian as a kind of scientist. He considers that he can see signs of order in the world, and he thinks up a hypothesis to account for this: the deistic hypothesis, or hypothesis of a supreme orderer. And let us remember that he is an intelligent natural theologian, and he has listened to Hume, so he knows that he cannot argue from effects to a cause greater than is necessary to produce those effects; therefore he does not think that his argument is an argument to the Christian God. He would say of it only that it is an argument to an orderer—whom he would like to be allowed to call "supreme" because he is greater than any other conceivable orderer (for he has ordered everything). He realizes also, and admits, that his argument is not a proof, if by "proof" is meant a conclusive demonstration. His proposition is a hypothesis, and he would not claim for it certainty. "Probability is the very guide of life." But he would claim that it is just as likely to be true as a scientific hypothesis. "Just as the natural scientist offers his hypotheses to account for the order that he has observed in particular parts or aspects of the universe," the natural theologian might say, "so I offer my hypothesis to account for order in general."

We are now to see what is involved in the view that the deistic hypothesis is scientific.

The marks of a scientific hypothesis, let us say, are: (*a*) it

adequately accounts for the facts actually observed; (*b*) it can be used to predict; (*c*) it is empirically testable, and may be (or should be) falsified by the finding of a negative instance. This list is no doubt over-simplified, but it will do for our purposes. I do not propose to discuss the first directly, though I shall have something to say about it by implication in what follows. The other two marks of a scientific hypothesis are more important, but on the second I shall make only one comment. From the hypothesis: "There is a supreme orderer who has arranged the universe in an ordered way" we can presumably predict: if I tomorrow make observations of something that I have not observed before (the workings of the inner ear, say) I shall observe there signs of order. But we must note that the scientist would not predict simply that I shall observe order; he would say what state of affairs I should observe in the inner ear, not simply that I should observe there an ordered state of affairs. This is a most important difference between the scientist and the natural theologian.

On the third mark of a scientific hypothesis, that it must be empirically testable, I have more to say. Here the deistic hypothesis gets into real difficulties. It is hard to see what sort of evidence would be relevant either to supporting it or to falsifying it. The answer to the question "What sort of evidence?" that the natural theologian would make is, I suppose, "Evidence of order." This needs to be examined. We can attack the hypothesis on its assumption that the universe is ordered (or orderly) without considering the question of an orderer at all.

"Order" is a relative thing. If you decide to look for evidence of order to test your hypothesis, how do you know when you have found it? Order is harder to find than, say, Uranium 235. And it is hard to find for a different reason from that for which U 235 is hard to find. U 235 is hard to find because there is not much of it; but when we do find some we at least know that we have found U 235; we know what U 235 is. Order is hard to find, not because there is not much of it, but because we do not know what it is. Whether or not you see order in something depends on how you look at it. If there are a lot of blobs of many colours on a piece of paper, the crimson, orange, and scarlet blobs in which form together a rough kind of square, while the blobs of other colours are arranged anyhow, are we to say that the colours exhibit order or not? That depends on how you look at it. You can probably find "order" in anything, if you consider it in one of the ways in which it may be considered. And you can probably find "disorder" in anything if you consider it in other ways.

It might be said that the scientist, too, sees order in what he is considering, and either does not see, or does not take account of, disorder. He knows the sort of thing he is looking for; he is looking

for—figuratively—reddish blobs, and the rest are of no concern to him, at the moment. And the scientist tends to examine what is most easily examinable. But this would be misleading. The scientist does not really see "order"—he sees the particular things or events he is interested in. He is not interested in "order." Order is something that one does not see unless one is looking for it; and then one always sees it. The natural theologian is looking for order. It is misleading to say that the scientist sees order; for all he sees is such-and-such things behaving in such-and-such a way, and that is how he himself would describe what he sees (though he might also say that he sees them behaving in accordance with whatever happens to be his pet theory). It is a gloss or interpretation that only a natural theologian would supply to add that the scientist really or also is seeing "order."

There is, to pass on, also the objection that the deistic hypothesis is unscientific because it is vague, or because it is not expressed in quantitative terms. And certainly it is vague, at least in the form that I have given it: There is a supreme orderer who has arranged the universe in an ordered way. What does it mean to say that the universe is ordered? As I asked earlier, what would it be like if it were not ordered? It really seems that by saying that the universe is ordered we are saying no more than that the universe is as it is. And there would seem to be no way of making the idea more precise. So we come back to the point just made that we cannot empirically test the hypothesis "There is a supreme orderer who has arranged the universe in an ordered way" for the reason (for at least this reason) that we do not know what are the criteria that would distinguish an ordered universe from a disordered one.

But perhaps this objection arises, at least in part, because I have not done sufficient justice to the deistic hypothesis in my expression of it. As I put it, it is hopelessly vague, unquantitative, and probably untestable. But perhaps it is capable of expression in quantitative (or "precise"?) terms. Suppose we write it thus: There is a supreme orderer who has arranged the universe in such a way that it obeys all the laws that scientists have so far discovered and will in the future discover. This expression is implicitly quantitative because it is a sort of shorthand, and could be expanded into a list of all discovered and to-be-discovered scientific laws, and these are themselves quantitative. But this will not work. Some sciences have laws not quantitatively expressed. Astronomy is not the only science that we must take account of if we are to describe the universe.

A further difficulty. The deistic hypothesis, because it covers the immense field it does, subsumes scientific hypotheses under it. The question is whether the deistic hypothesis is not so all-embracing as to be quite useless—perhaps not meaningful. What accounts for everything accounts for nothing. The Law of Gravity is fairly all-embrac-

ing; but it is not nearly as all-embracing as the deistic hypothesis. Gravitation accounts for many things, yet not for a fraction of all the things there are. (And this quite apart from the ambiguity of "things." Gravitation doesn't even account for all things of the same sort—physical events.) The meaningfulness of a scientific law or hypothesis has something to do with the fact that it does not try to account for everything. What accounts for everything is not a scientific hypothesis but a metaphysical hypothesis or principle. The deistic hypothesis, if it does, as it claims, account for everything, is a strange kind of scientific hypothesis.

A hypothesis that tries to account for everything would probably land itself in type confusions, e.g. it might "account for" the universe in terms of God, but then God would be left outside, and it wouldn't have accounted for "everything"; to put God in now would generate a type mistake. But "everything" is anyway too vague an expression for use here.

A final difficulty. There is a mark of scientific hypotheses that I have not mentioned. Or rather, not a mark of scientific hypotheses themselves so much as a mark of the procedure of the scientist. If there is more than one way of accounting for the same facts, the scientist, other things being equal, adopts the simpler. This again, is an oversimplification, for he may in some cases want to adopt both, and use each in different circumstances. But let us disregard this for the moment.

Now it happens that there is an alternative to the deistic hypothesis which covers the same field and which is simpler than that hypothesis. The deistic hypothesis, as I stated it, runs: There is a supreme orderer who has arranged the universe in an ordered way. The alternative runs, simply: The universe is arranged in an orderly ("ordered," as I mentioned above, perhaps suggests an orderer) way. This would be one expression of the Principle of the Uniformity of Nature. This alternative says the same thing as the deistic hypothesis, but does not mention an orderer. (On one level, "The universe is arranged in an orderly way" is what is to be accounted for; on another, it is the accounting, or it is a way of saying there is no accounting for it.)

If the natural theologian is to preserve his claim to be a scientist, he must admit that his theory is not as simple as its alternative, and accordingly should reject the deistic hypothesis in favour of the simpler one. His only way out would be to suggest that, although it is not so simple, the deistic hypothesis is still to be preferred for other, but still scientific, reasons. He could begin talking about a sufficient explanation's requiring reference to efficient causality, but then, surely, he would be ceasing to talk scientifically.

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KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

W. D. GLASGOW

In a recent article in *Mind*,[1] called *A Religious Way of Knowing*, Mr. C. B. Martin considers the claim made by some theologians to know the existence of God on the basis of direct experience of God. His paper is, he says, "an attempt to indicate how statements concerning a certain alleged religious way of knowing betray a logic extraordinarily like that of statements concerning introspective and subjective ways of knowing. It is not my wish (he continues) to go from a correct suggestion that the logic is *very, very* like to the incorrect suggestion that the logic is *just* like." He is examining, then, the analogy of religious statements with what might be called psychological statements and the result of his examination seems to work out as follows: the religious statement "I have direct experience of God" is like a psychological statement ("I seem to see a star," "I feel or seem to feel pain," etc.) but it is *not* itself a psychological statement. It is *not* a psychological statement (p. 507), because it makes an existential claim which a straightforward psychological statement does not make; and an existential claim, in this sense, is a claim that some particular thing other than a state of mind of the speaker exists. In what sense then is the religious statement *like* a psychological statement? Martin's view seems to be that the religious statement is *not like* a psychological statement in *meaning*, or better, in so far as it does involve an existential claim in the sense stated; but it *is like* a psychological statement in so far as it does not admit of verification (Martin seems to avoid the expression "verification" and to prefer to speak of "not admitting of tests and checking procedures," cf. p. 504 and p. 502, etc.; but for "verification," cf. p. 512, line 10). He says on p. 506, "the bulk of this paper has been devoted to showing some of the many forms this similarity [between religious statements and psychological statements] takes." Since this paper has had considerable influence in England, and since its meaning is, in places, obscure, it may be not unrewarding to discuss it in some detail, if only for the sake of clarification of issues.

Martin describes the alleged religious way of knowing as follows: "I have direct experience (knowledge, acquaintance, apprehension) of God, therefore I have valid reason to believe that God exists." By this, he goes on to say, it may be meant that the statement "I have had direct experience of God but God does not exist" is contradictory, since the assertion "I have direct experience of God" is

[1] *Mind*, Vol. LXI, No. 244 (1952), pp. 497–512. Reprinted in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (S.C.M. Press, 1955), edited by Flew and MacIntyre.

more than a psychological statement, and claims more than that I have certain sensations—it claims, in fact, that God exists, and this is more than is warranted by the experience itself.

I shall take it that what he is saying here is that the argument, if deductive, is formally correct; but that this is useless because no deductive argument can get anything into the conclusion which is not already contained in the premises; hence, if it is read deductively, it merely follows that, in the premiss "I have direct experience of . . . God" the phrase "direct experience" is used in a sense which entails the existence of an object. But in that case the question arises whether the premiss is true, i.e. whether we are, in fact, justified in making this claim. Later on—and more crucially—he argues that if we say that the experience guarantees itself we surely assimilate it to a psychological statement; whereas if we reject the view that it is merely psychological we invite the question "What are the tests?"

Let us examine the position a little more closely. Martin says (p. 498), and, incidentally, reveals much of the theory of knowledge on which his argument rests, that "psychological statements of the form:

1. I feel as if an unseen person were interested in (willed) my welfare.
2. I feel an elation quite unlike any I have ever felt before.
3. I have feelings of guilt and shame at my sinfulness.
4. I feel as if I were committed to bending all my efforts to living in a certain way, etc. etc.

can make the claim only that I have these complex feelings and sensations. Nothing else follows deductively." Let us look at the first and most interesting statement: "I feel as if an unseen person were interested in (willed) my welfare." Professor Ryle has some remarks which might be relevant here. He writes:[1] "Sometimes we say 'feel as if,' 'seems to feel,' or 'imagines he feels' to avoid having to produce the ironical tones of voice or the quotation marks which indicate the 'mock' use of the verb." "The condemned man already 'feels' the rope about his neck, though there is not yet any rope around his neck, just as he 'hears' the tolling bell although it is not yet tolling, and he 'sees' the gallows although they are not yet erected." In the same way, I suppose, I may feel an unseen person and I have the suspicion at the back of my mind that there is really no such unseen person. Perhaps, I say to myself, if I were in better health or had more company during the day I would not get such feelings. So, to remedy the situation, I go out and ask a friend to a game of squash.

Now it appears that Martin substitutes for the religious man's "I feel God" or "I feel the presence of God" (or "I feel an unseen

[1] "Feelings," *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 1. No. 3. (1951), pp. 193–205.

person" and "I feel the presence of an unseen person") the expression "I feel as if. . ." He thus reads the religious man's statement "I feel God's presence" as if it contained the "mock" use of "feel") as if it were "I 'feel' God's presence"), whereas for the religious man his expression is intended to include "feel" in a way that is far more similar to what Ryle calls the "perceptual" use. "Feeling in this sense is one of our ways of detecting or discerning things. We feel with our fingers or our tongues as we see with our eyes." So that, instead of saying—"I feel *as if* an unseen person were interested in my welfare" —the religious man would be more inclined to say—"I feel an unseen person who is interested in my welfare." The religious man does not usually speak as Martin apparently would have him speak, hesitatingly and inquiringly: there is no doubt in his mind; he speaks with assurance and confidence. "The sense of the presence of God," says one mystic, "is not gained through imagination; it is a spiritual and experimental certainty." Thus, as we can recognize objects existing independently of us, so the mystic can recognize that God is more than the experience. There is, somehow, about this experience a sense of objectivity: we are in the presence of something other than ourselves. Of course, Martin's main point, to which he returns again and again, is that there are tests to establish the existence of physical objects, but no tests to establish whether the sense of objectivity, which is apparently an integral part of many religious experiences, is justified. But Martin does seem in places to underestimate the cognitive side of the religious way of knowing. For example, he does admit (Section IIA, p. 498) that the statement "I have had direct experience of God" is more than a psychological statement. But a few lines later he writes: "The addition of the existential claim 'God exists' to the *psychological* claim of having religious experiences must be shown to be warrantable" (*italics mine*). So it would seem that the statement "I have direct experience of God" is regarded both as psychological and as more than psychological (presumably existential). This contradiction would be resolved if Martin would be prepared to say that the statement, while existential in grammatical form, is only, epistemologically, a psychological statement. Martin, in fact, seems to assume his conclusion before he has argued it. But, apart from this fault in form, the author makes too much of the supposed argument of Farmer and Baillie that "because I have experience of God, God exists." They do not in fact argue thus—and indeed reject argument—but simply assert that there is genuine awareness of God, that there is direct knowledge of God's reality. As Baillie says (p. 497): "It is not as the result of an inference of any kind, whether explicit or implicit, whether laboriously excogitated or swiftly intuited, that the knowledge of God's reality comes to us."

(I have referred, and shall refer, to the mystics, although the author

does not mention them in his paper. I do so because the alleged religious way of knowing put forward by the theologians is that so often described by the mystics. The theologian, it is to be noted, may base his description of this way of knowing on mystical experience, although he himself need not be a mystic.)

In Section IIc (p. 499) Martin writes: "Neither is the addition of the existential claim 'God exists' to the psychological claim ['I have direct knowledge of God'] made good by any inductive argument." There are no tests which can be applied which will distinguish genuine experience of God from the ungenuine. The statement "I had direct experience of God at 4.37 p.m., the 6th May, 1939" is not an empirical statement in the way in which, for example, "I am a changed man since 4.37 p.m., the 6th May, 1939" is. We are not sure how the first statement can be checked, and the fact that the man has changed his habits can add nothing to prove, or disprove, his statement. Martin is right here. There is no checking procedure, and this, I think, has long been recognized. Nor is it surprising that our statements about the external world can be checked in a way that our statements about God cannot. We know that tables and chairs must be, as has been said, "public and neutral." If a man's statement about the external world is not confirmed by other people, then we might suspect that he is suffering from an hallucination. Being public and neutral is one of the main conditions which we presuppose in *calling* anything a physical object or substance. This condition is not fulfilled in religious experience; but we are not entitled to draw from this the conclusion that religious experience has no existential or objective import. All the religious man can say is that the word "God" is not a physical object word, and that statements about God cannot be verified (if at all) in the same way as statements about physical objects.

Later on, Martin makes a rather curious statement (p. 500). "An important point to note (he writes) is that the theologian discourages any detailed description of the required experience ('apprehension of God')." Such a statement would need to be backed up by some examples. He goes on: "The more naturalistic and detailed the description of the required experience became, the easier would it become to deny the existential claim. One could say, 'Yes, *I* had those very experiences, but they certainly did not convince me of God's existence'." Notice the phrase "the more naturalistic and detailed the description." The implication seems to be that the more detailed the description the more naturalistic it would be, and if we had a complete description, then it would be clear that no existential claim could be made. It is important to ask what sort of description is required by Martin. Pratt, for example, quotes one of his correspondents who writes: "With me the physical effects begin usually

with a quivering and upheaving of the diaphragm which starts a wave of sensation upward through the chest region and into the pharynx, and results in incipient yawning. This, in turn, is followed by an excitement of the lachrymal glands and tears sometimes fill my eyes." Such a description of the physical manifestation of the experience is certainly "detailed and naturalistic" (and may seem to support Martin's argument) but, in fact, it would be felt by the mystics to miss its essence. It might be possible for other experiences, such as those which could be explained in terms of natural causes, to manifest themselves in similar physical phenomena. Yet the repeated assertion of the mystic is, as Martin recognizes, that his experience is unique. It is ineffable, that is, it cannot be described or analysed at all adequately. The author of the *Theologica Germanica*, speaking of the man with mystical experience, writes "he who is not such a man can neither explain it nor know it, and he who is, knoweth indeed, but he cannot utter it for it is unspeakable." The mystic realizes that he must describe his experience in sensuous terms but feels intensely the inadequacy of those terms. It seems to me, therefore, that if a description is more detailed it is more naturalistic only in the sense that a greater number of sensuous terms may, of necessity, have to be used. Yet no one is more aware than the mystic of the inappropriateness of such language, and indeed he might be the first to agree that the language used of mystical experience is symbolic rather than descriptive.

In Section III Martin goes on to another point. He writes: "No one can deny the existence of feelings and experiences which the believer calls 'religious' and no one can deny their power. Because of this, and because the way of knowing by direct experiences is neither inductive nor deductive, theologians have tried to give this way of knowing a special status. One way in which this has been done has been to claim that religious experience is unique and incommunicable." So that the religious man in claiming that the experience is unique is holding that the experience cannot be fully understood except by one who has had the experience. But, as Martin says (p. 502), "all that is proved is that, in order to know what religious experience is, one must have religious experience. This helps in no way to prove that such experience is direct apprehension of God and helps in no way to support the existential claim 'God exists'." But the question can be asked: Does the religious man argue from the uniqueness of the experience to the existence of God? Let us look at the quotation from Farmer, given at the beginning of the paper. "If now we ask how we would expect such a reality (God) to disclose Himself to us, the answer can only be that we can have no expectancy about the matter at all; for, in the nature of the case, there are no parallels, no analogies, on which expectancy may be based. The

divine reality is, by definition, unique." In this quotation, Farmer is giving the answer: "the experience is unique" to a person asking the question: "give me an idea of what to expect if God discloses Himself to me." He certainly is not making the uniqueness of the experience the basis of an argument for God's existence.

Martin then introduces another point, based on this doctrine of uniqueness. Farmer makes the important analogy that describing the experience of God to an unbeliever is like describing colour to a blind man. It seems to me that Martin suggests (although not in these words) that, in so far as colour is objective, it is not sensed by the individual, but, in so far as it *is* sensed, it is subjective. Such indeed appears to be his theory of knowledge. The analogy holds, of course, only if "knowing colour" is made synonymous and coextensive with "having colour sensations," and in this sense the blind man certainly cannot know colour and the man of normal vision cannot tell him what it would be like to know colour. But for Martin, colour experience, being entirely subjective, supplies no analogy with the objective experience of God which the religious man is attempting to prove. On the contrary, in so far as there *is* an analogy, it only confirms the subjective nature of religious experience. The analogy, Martin believes, thus only endangers the existential claim about God, which it was intended to establish.

Let us, for the moment, take the analogy as it stands and consider whether it is as disastrous for the argument as Martin seems to think. In the first place, it is possible to hold that the man of normal vision does not simply have "colour-experience": he sees coloured objects. He might, for example, be looking at his dog and see it as a white dog with black paws. If he wants to make sure that he is not dreaming, he might stretch out his hand and touch it, and perhaps bend down and smell it. The blind man also is aware of the same dog. He, too, can feel it with his hands, and smell it, but his knowledge of the dog is not so extensive. He cannot have as much first-hand experience of the dog as the man with normal vision. We cannot tell the blind man anything which would make him fully understand me when I say that the dog is white with black paws. If he suddenly received the the gift of sight, then perhaps he would say, after being taught to use colour words, etc.: "Why yes, the dog is white and has black paws." Thereafter he would understand me every time I referred to the dog in those terms. For the purpose of the analogy surely it is enough to say that as the man of normal vision knows the world in a way that the blind man does not, so the mystic knows or apprehends God in a way that the non-mystic does not.

Martin might reply to this line of argument as follows: "If 'knowing colour' is to have an existential reference concerning features of the world, then a whole society of tests and check-up procedures become

relevant." That, I think, is so (and this point is the most crucial of the whole article). But Martin holds that all statements to which tests and check-up procedures are *not* applicable, as well as statements definitely disproved by such tests, must of necessity be assimilated to psychological statements, since the majority of such statements are indisputably psychological. If I say "I see a white object," then, in order to establish whether there really is a white object for me to see, I must admittedly have recourse to various checking procedures. It may happen that these tests show that I have made a mistake and that there really is not a white object there. What I did was to make a false existential statement instead of a true psychological statement. On the other hand, when I say "I have direct experience of God," *this* statement is not, nor should it have been, called psychological, just because I am unable to prove or disprove it by the usual methods. It may nevertheless be still a true existential statement, but one which, as it happens, cannot be verified in the way that physical object statements can be verified. And the fact that it cannot be verified is due not necessarily to any subjectivity in the experience but to the nature of God Himself, whose existence cannot be established by tests applicable only to physical objects. For absence of verification, where verification does not belong, does not, as Martin holds, prove any experience to be subjective, but only makes it difficult for the external observer to know whether it *is* subjective or not.

The whole discussion of experience and verification leads perhaps to the following classifications:

(A) Where tests are applicable, the experience may be (*a*) proved (= "objective"), (*b*) disproved (= "subjective"), (*c*) neither proved nor disproved because of practical difficulties (="may be either");

(B) Where tests are *not* applicable, the experience may be (*a*) subjective ("I feel sad"), (*b*) objective ("I am aware of God").

It is the latter category (B) that is most important for the defenders of the religious way of knowing. The former (A) is only relevant in so far as the colour analogy may be discussed. Though such experience may be objective, it may also be subjective and often quite certainly is; it does not guarantee itself, therefore, and the analogy is thus an unfortunate one for people like Baillie and Farmer. We may still say, of course, that the religious man, being aware of God, is in a similar position to a normal sighted man being aware of colour on such occasions as he really *is* aware of colour (i.e. when tests show him to be). But the question still stands, "how do we, or how does the religious man himself, *know* when this experience is genuine?" It becomes open to the sceptic to assert that it never *is* (religious people admit that it

is, anyhow, sometimes false), particularly as no tests are here even applicable. Yet the religious man, as Martin recognizes, cannot fall back on the statement "I *seem* to have direct experience of God," for this statement presupposes experience of God known to be genuine, and the question then again arises: how do we know such an experience to be genuine? Both religious statements and "seeming" statements, strictly speaking, cannot be verified; but in the case of "seeming" statements which refer to the physical world tests can at least show whether the experience, if it exists, is objective or subjective, whereas for religious statements no similar tests are possible. [Here, I would disagree with Martin, who argues that a "seeming" statement ("I seem to see a star") involves "no claim about the existence of an object and so requires no such tests and no testimony of others; indeed the sole judge of the truth of the statement is the person making it" p. 506]. Martin lumps together all "seeming" statements with statements more obviously psychological, such as "I feel sad," which both grammatically and factually refer to feelings and are truly non-verifiable. Logically, the real difficulty is to distinguish the two types of non-verifiable proposition. B(*a*) and (*b*). If non-verifiability assimilates religious statements to psychological ones (Martin overemphasizes this, and is possibly in danger of defining "psychological" as "non-verifiable") it may be asked: what separates them? It is essential here for the defender of the religious way of knowing to assert that there are cases where a man *knows* himself to be experiencing an objective Deity, just as there are cases where he knows himself to be experiencing a subjective pain. Unless it is insisted that there is such a thing as *cognitive experience* in religion, Martin's assimilation of all religious existential statements to psychological statements (or what ought to be called psychological statements) becomes highly plausible. Indeed, even the phrase "*may* be objective" has no meaning, probably, for Martin, unless theoretically at least it is possible to find out or test whether religious experience *is* objective. The position is only saved, again, if we say that in some cases the agent himself anyhow *does* know. This view Farmer does indeed take up when he asserts that the experience guarantees itself: ". . . we would expect that if we know the reality of God in respect of this fundamental aspect of His being at all, we shall just know that we are dealing with God, the ultimate source and disposer of all things, including ourselves, and there will be nothing more to be said" (p. 497).

Martin's method is exemplified clearly in the analogy he draws at the end of his paper between aesthetic experience and religious experience (p. 509 ff.). He admits that there is a sense in which an art critic "who has vastly increased our aesthetic sensitivity and whose books on art criticism are the very best, may never have known beauty." "This sense (he continues) just is that we are determined

not to say that a person has seen the beauty of something or has knowledge of beauty if he does not at some time have certain complex emotions and feelings which are typically associated with looking at paintings, hearing music and reading poetry. To 'know beauty' or to 'see beauty' means, among other things, to have certain sorts of emotions and feelings." Martin goes on to compare the theologian with the art critic, saying that there is a sense in which a theologian may never have known God. He does this by employing over again the expressions he has just applied to the art critic, changing only the relevant words. The passage then reads as follows: "this sense just is that we are determined not to say that a person has knowledge of God if he does not at some time have certain complex emotions and feelings which are associated with attending religious services, praying and reading the Bible. To 'know God,' or to be confronted with God's 'personal presence' means, of necessity, having certain sorts of emotions and feelings." The last sentence of each quotation is the most interesting, indicating as it does the tendency in Martin to emphasize (in my opinion unduly) the subjective nature of aesthetic as of religious experience. One gets the impression very strongly that he is using a "nothing but" argument: these types of experience when analysed, prove to be nothing but certain emotions and feelings. The two sentences ought to read: "to 'know beauty' or to 'see the beauty' of something means, among other things, to have certain sorts of emotions and feelings," and "to 'know God' or to be confronted with God's 'personal presence' means, among other things, having certain sorts of emotions and feelings." If this were the form then it is clear that Martin might have to admit the possibility that *among the other things* there might be an element of cognition. As it is, he used, instead of the words "among other things," the words "of necessity," and so leads one's mind away from the question whether religious experience can be analysed into anything more than emotions and feelings. Most people would agree that emotions and feelings are part of what we call an aesthetic experience, and they would also agree that emotions and feelings are part of what we call a religious experience. In this sense, at any rate, there is an analogy between aesthetic experience and religious experience. But the questions then arise: are aesthetic statements more than statements about emotions and feelings? Are statements about religious experience anything more than statements about emotions and feelings? A person could accept the analogy and yet maintain that for him aesthetic judgments have an objective reference. In this case the analogy confirms rather than destroys the existential claim of the theologian. But even if aesthetic experience is held to be essentially subjective it is still possible to maintain that religious experience involves a cognitive element and in that case the analogy no longer serves any useful purpose.

Briefly, two more points:

(*a*) Need the word "psychological" disturb the religious man? After all, God is also, in some sense, within us, and terms like "objective" and "objective experience" hardly do justice to His nature. From this point of view tests cease to be important, and the quality of the experience itself is the important factor.

(*b*) Martin is prepared to allow some groups of religious people to escape his analysis. " . . . the 'call,' in even the most liberal and 'subjective' Quaker sects, could not be reduced to feeling statements, etc. The 'call,' among other things, implies a mission or intricate programme of behaviour" (p. 499). But surely it also implies, and this is fundamental, that Somebody is "calling"? People who talk in this way might well say "God has called me to His service." No matter what such a person's subsequent behaviour is, it could neither prove nor disprove his statement, and we are back once again to statements of the logical status of "I have had direct experience of God" and all the difficulties involved for Martin in such statements.

What, then, has Martin been trying to do? He says (p. 506), "the bulk of this paper has been devoted to showing some of the many forms this similarity (between religious statements and psychological statements) takes." What are these "many forms" of similarity? The important point that emerges from the paper is that religious experience, like psychological experience, does not guarantee itself. Because of this, Martin is prepared to assimilate the religious experience statement to the "I feel pain" class of psychological statement (the real example of non-verifiable propositions). In neither case are tests relevant, and it is mainly this that makes the logic of religious assertions very like that of psychological assertions. This, I take it, is the main point of similarity.

Other forms of simil[illegible] it seems are meant to be these:

(i) Neither the t[illegible] of religious statements nor the truth of psychological stat[illegible]ts is established inductively. Martin does not actually say this [illegible]icitly about psychological statements, and in any case it would appear to amount to the same thing as the first similarity ("no tests").

(ii) The kinds of experience referred to in the religious statement and in *any* psychological statement are, in each case, "unique" (p. 501); "anything can qualify as a primary mode of knowledge."

(iii) In the same way, the kinds of experience referred to in the religious statement and in any psychological statement are, in each case, "incommunicable" in the sense given to this by the theologians considered.

What points (ii) and (iii) seem to amount to is that there is nothing very exciting about the theologian's claim that religious experience

is "unique" and "incommunicable"; the theologian, however, may not intend his claim to be exciting, but would rather look on it as an explanation why some people do say, and others deny, that God exists; some people, he says, are, for some reason, God-blind.

For Martin, then, religious experience seems to be *no more than* a complex of feelings and sensations. The assertion that the logic of religious statements is "very, very like" the logic of subjective statements surely entails that, for him, religious experiences are of a similar status epistemologically to purely psychological experiences. This does not mean that he has thereby committed himself to the view that God does not exist, but only to the belief that the argument from direct experience does not prove His existence.

Mr. Martin's provocative article also suggested to me some thoughts of a different nature. For example, I would like to suggest that to speak of "direct experience of God" is rather misleading for it might be held that the experience is not *of* God. The experience would itself, according to the mystics, *be* God. Eckhart says: "the knower and the known are one. Simple people imagine that they should see God, as if He stood there and they here. This is not so. God and I, we are one in knowledge." And again he says: "For it is of the very essence of the soul that she is powerless to plumb the depth of her creator. And here one cannot speak of the soul any more, for she has lost her nature yonder in the oneness of divine essence." There are many other passages in a similar vein. It seems, then, that in the experience neither subject nor object can be distinguished, and that the statement "I have direct experience of God," while it might inform the listener that I have had an experience, might mislead him, if he is a non-mystic, concerning the nature of the experience. For the subject-object relationship has disappeared and with it has disappeared the possibility of analysing the experience without either destroying it, as Martin seems to do, or changing it, as Farmer himself does. Neither the subjectivism of the one nor the dualism of the other is applicable to ultimate and indivisible Reality. This leads on to the second point.

Theologians speak of the uniqueness of the religious experience. In their sense of the word when we speak of the uniqueness of an experience we mean simply that it is impossible for a person who has had the experience to communicate it to one who has not had it. Farmer and other theologians seem to believe that religious experience is of this nature. That is, according to this doctrine, those who have had the experience, if they were supplied with a greater number of words or a larger vocabulary, could no longer think of the experience as ineffable and incommunicable, for it could be described and the language could be understood by those who have had a similar experience and who have troubled to learn the language. But at this

point one might ask why it is that the mystics have never developed a language of their own. Stace suggests that this cannot be done in the nature of the case. It is neither poverty of language nor lack of experience which leads the mystics to speak of uniqueness, of incommunicability or of the ineffable, but rather the nature of that which is experienced. God is still a mystery even to the mystic who has experience of Him. For, as Stace says (*Time and Eternity*, 1952): "The discursive, discriminating, conceptual intellect cannot apprehend the divine. It cannot be understood by any process of analysis, separation or re-synthesis of concepts." Those divines who compare the non-mystic with the blind man mislead us by suggesting that with the coming of religious experience the mystery of God disappears. On the contrary, apparently, the mystery only deepens and it cannot be lessened by learning more or finding new channels of information. For this reason more than because of possible faults in method and technique any attempt to disprove the validity of religious experience, or indeed to prove it, by appeal to rationalistic categories is bound to fail. And though this may seem a hard saying for those who genuinely attempt to bring all things to the bar of reason, nevertheless we do well to recognize that in these ultimate matters our only resource is the writings of the mystics, and these are unequivocal and unanimous. Whether we accept them or reject them, here we must turn if we would gain any insight into the religious way of knowing that belongs most completely to them.

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CAN I HAVE A DUTY TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

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THE question I have asked, whether or not we can have a duty to believe in God, must be clearly distinguished from the question whether or not there is a God. It is possible to hold that there is a God and that I have a duty to believe that there is, but it is also possible to hold that there is a God, and I do not have a duty to believe that there is; that there is not a God, and I do not have a duty to believe there is; and that there is not a God, but I do have a duty to believe that there is. This last statement is somewhat implausible—though people have held that though there is not a God, we have a duty to produce belief that there is in others—and anyone making it would be showing thereby, if he believed it, that he himself had not done his duty. It should be noticed that anyone trying to convince an atheist that he has a duty to believe in God must be trying to persuade him to accept this statement: that he, the atheist, has a duty to believe in God, although there is no God. That his belief that there is no God is false, if it is false, does not make the task any the more easy.

"Believing in God" is ambiguous. Commonly "believing in God" means "believing that there is a God," and most people, if asked whether they believed in God or not, would not hesitate to say "Yes" if they thought that God existed, but a woman who was asked if she believed in her husband would not reply in the affirmative simply because she believed she had a husband. She would say she believed in her husband if she had faith in him, but her having faith in her husband would not consist in accepting, or even in accepting without question or inquiry, the truth of the statement that her husband existed. It is, however, arguable that though a woman's believing in her husband does not consist in her accepting as true the statement that he exists, it does consist in her accepting as true certain other statements, e.g. that he has been faithful to her, that he is not guilty of the crimes for which he is imprisoned, that he will be successful in his enterprises. Analogously, I suppose, a man who believed that there was a God, but that He ran the universe shockingly badly, might be described as not believing in God, because he did not accept certain statements about the nature of God even though he did accept the statement that there was a God.

However, I am not prepared to accept the view that believing in God, in all its senses, consists wholly in accepting the truth of certain propositions, e.g. that there is a God, that He is a good God,

that He loves us and cares for us, and so on. One believes in God, in at least one sense of this phrase, if one puts one's trust in Him, and putting one's trust in God is not something we think, but something we do. I shall provisionally define putting one's trust in God as putting into practice to some extent or other (which cannot be precisely specified) certain precepts—e.g. "Love your enemies"—and following certain recipes—recipes such as "To inherit eternal life, do so-and-so"—which precepts and recipes we believe to have somehow issued from Him.

On the other hand, neither am I prepared to accept the view that believing in God, in all its senses, consists wholly in what we do and not at all in what we think. (This view may be suggested by the rather trite statement that Christianity is a way of life.) No doubt one of the differences between, e.g., a Christian and a man who is not a Christian lies in the sort of life he leads, but it is also the case that Christians accept what may roughly but not uncharitably be described as a metaphysical theory which those who are not Christians reject. Personally I feel that, whether true or not, this theory is of the utmost importance. Take it away, and there is little left of Christianity but a form of utilitarianism—which also tells us, though in less picturesque language, to love our neighbours and forgive our enemies—coupled with a certain amount of edifying myth, therapeutic confessional, aesthetically satisfying ritual, and recreational hymn-singing.

The question whether or not I can have a duty to believe in God, therefore, splits up into several questions: (1) whether I have a duty to accept the truth of the statement or proposition that there is a God; (2) whether I have a duty to act on the precepts and recipes which allegedly emanate from Him, and (3) the bearing of an answer to the first question upon any answer we may give to the second. I shall start with the first: Have I a duty to accept as true the statement that there is a God?

It is a commonplace of moral philosophy that I cannot have a duty which it is not in my power to perform; ought, in other words, implies can. So at least one reason for thinking that I cannot have a duty to believe in God is that belief is involuntary. It is sometimes held that when I try to answer a question of the type "Is such-and-such a statement true or false?" what I do is voluntarily to search for evidence, but that after this, belief is forced upon me, one way or the other, by the evidence. On this view, I can make up my mind whether or not to inquire, and when to stop inquiring, but I cannot myself determine whether I shall be in a state of belief or disbelief or doubt at the time when I voluntarily determine to cease my inquiry. That belief is at least partly involuntary is possibly one reason why people object to the torturing of infidels or heretics as a means

of persuading them to change their infidel or heretical beliefs, but an alternative explanation would be that belief, though voluntary, could not be compelled. Though you may lead a horse to the water, but cannot make him drink, drinking is nevertheless a voluntary action. Furthermore, a horse who does not drink may easily be detected, but a heretic who professes orthodoxy may get away with it altogether in this world, if not in the next.

There are, however, a number of reasons for thinking belief to be at least partly voluntary. We talk of deciding *that* such-and-such is the case, as well as deciding *to* perform such-and-such an action. We have already seen that inquiring is voluntary, but though inquiring may generally consist in inquiring into something on which we have as yet formed no opinion, we sometimes inquire into something which we already believe, and this seems to involve a voluntary, if temporary, suspension of belief or disbelief, as the case may be. Just as we describe things as easy, difficult, or impossible to do, so we describe things as easy, difficult, or impossible to believe. Just as we describe a man as timid, courageous, conservative, enterprising, slipshod, careful, thorough because of how he behaves, so we apply the same epithets to him on account of how he thinks. It is worthy of note, however, that we speak of a timid, courageous, conservative, etc., thinker, not of a timid, courageous, etc., believer, so all this may indicate is that it is inquiring, not believing, which is voluntary, which no one disputes. Lastly, we may find other people's beliefs shocking or the reverse, which may indicate that we think they are voluntary, though in thinking this we may be mistaken.

To cut short what may become a long story—for belief is a very involved and controversial subject—let me say that, even if it is possible voluntarily to believe some things, it is certainly not possible voluntarily to believe all. Matilda's aunt may have found it just possible to believe Matilda, even though the effort did nearly kill her, but the firemen apparently found this impossible, with the tragic consequences to Matilda which Belloc has recorded.[1] Furthermore, the possibility or impossibility of believing something is relative to the would-be believer. Jones may find it easy to believe what Smith finds difficult and Robinson impossible. I should add that believing that there is a God, so far as I can see, is not different from other beliefs in this respect; some find it easy to believe that there is a God, others difficult, others may find it impossible, and yet others find it impossible to believe that there is not a God.

Up to now I have been considering the voluntariness of belief from the point of view of what beliefs the would-be believer can believe at will here and now. If we consider what beliefs he can produce given time, more things are possible to him. I may find

[1] H. Belloc, *Cautionary Tales. Matilda.*

it impossible, here and now, to believe that I am well, but if I repeat to myself every morning for a fortnight "Every day and in every way, I am getting better and better" I may eventually find myself believing that I am getting better and better, and, what is more important, though for our present purpose less interesting, actually get better. I may find it impossible to believe that the measures proposed by the Conservative Party for stopping the rise in the cost of living will be successful, but if, for a long period of time, I associate with conservatives only, pay attention to conservative arguments, and no attention at all to those of the Opposition, I may be pleased to note such a belief developing insensibly inside me—until, at any rate, I reflect upon the means whereby I have produced it. I may find it impossible to believe that I am now basking in the sun in Sorrento, but, if I go to a professor of Educational Psychology, I may get him to produce this belief in me by hypnosis. Though, in a way, it is not I, but the Professor of Educational Psychology, who has, with God's help, produced this belief, in another way, it is I, for Aristotle, as Aquinas once pointed out in a less frivolous context, has said: "What we can do by our friends, we can in a sense do ourselves."[1] Lastly, William James speaks of a drug which causes the soul of the person who takes it positively to sweat with belief, though he is quite unable to say what he is believing.[2] It is true that such a drug would be useless if we wanted to produce any given belief, but it is not inconceivable that a drug could be produced which would enable the person who took it to believe anything he wanted to believe.

So though there is a limit to what we can believe at will here and now, there may be practically no limit to what we may believe in time, if we adopt suitable techniques and adventitious aids. I want now to pass on to the question: Assuming that we can voluntarily produce belief, can we have a duty to do so?

In order to discuss this question, I wish to introduce some preliminary philosophical distinctions. The first concerns the bearing of ignorance or mistake upon the duties of the person who is ignorant or mistaken. Let me take an example. Most people think they have a duty to tell the truth. Sometimes, however, I may make what I think is a true statement, though in fact it is a false one. Have I or have I not done my duty? I think that the majority of contemporary moral philosophers would say that I have. Perhaps the most weighty reasons which incline them to this answer are these. Firstly, if my duty depends on what is the case, as distinct from what I think is the case, then I will have duties which it is not in my power to discover. If a blood transfusion would save a

[1] *Summa Theologica*, 12ae, Q. 109, Art. 4.

[2] William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 284.

patient's life, then a doctor would have a duty to give a blood transfusion, even though he did not know that a blood transfusion would save the patient's life, and did not know that blood transfusion was possible—as would be the case, for example, if he lived in the days before blood transfusions had been invented. Secondly, if my duty depends on what actually is the case, as opposed to what I believe to be the case, then it will be possible for me to do my duty by mistake. A doctor who, before it had been discovered that fresh air was good for people suffering from tuberculosis, subjected his patient to fresh air, might well be trying to kill him. Yet if, as a result of this treatment, the patient recovered, the doctor would, if his duty depended on the fact that fresh air was good for the patient, and not on the fact that he believed it was bad for the patient, have done his duty. Lastly, if my duty depends on what is in fact the case, and not upon what I believe to be the case, then there will be no room for any duty to take precautions, For example, a married man is considering whether or not he ought to insure his life for a given period of time, and we will suppose, to simplify the argument, that the policy in question requires him to pay so much annually in return for which his wife will receive a lump sum in the event of his death, but that there is no payment in the event of the policy's maturing before his death. If his duty depends on the facts, as distinct from what he knows of the facts, he will have a duty to take out the policy only if he will not survive, and no duty if he will survive. No-one would say of a man who took out such a policy, thinking it possible or likely that he would die before it matured, that he had done something which was not his duty, on the grounds that in fact he survived, but this is what we ought to say if his duty depends on the facts, and not on his knowledge of them.

The second distinction I want to draw is a distinction between ubiquitous and non-ubiquitous duty, which is connected with a distinction between unconditional and conditional duty. A duty is unconditional if it admits of no exceptions. Some people allege that my duty to keep my promises or not to kill is unconditional in this sense. But the circumstances under which my duty to keep my promises applies—assuming, for the sake of argument, that this is an unconditional duty—may or may not arise, as in the case of the Scotsman, who kept his father's advice always to keep his promises, but was prudent enough never to make any. Clearly, if the fact that there was a God were a sufficient condition of my having a duty to believe that He existed, then my duty to believe that He existed would be ubiquitous, if He existed, for at no time would it be false that there was a God. I should further like to subdivide ubiquitous duties into two groups, though this subdivision is not necessary to my argument, i.e. into duties which are ubiquitous

in a strong sense, and duties which are ubiquitous in a weak one. A duty is ubiquitous in a weak sense if the circumstances which are the occasion of its applying always in fact occur, and ubiquitous in a strong sense if it is inconceivable that these circumstances should not occur. My duty to believe that there is a God—given that His existence is a sufficient condition of my having a duty to believe in Him—will be ubiquitous in a weak sense if it is just a matter of fact that there is a God; it will be ubiquitous in a strong sense if it is inconceivable that there should not be one.

Having too summarily disposed of the preliminary questions, let us now tackle the question: Have we a duty to believe that there is a God or not? I think someone might wish to argue that we ought to believe the statement that there is a God because it is a true statement. If so, it must be pointed out that we have no general duty to believe statements which are true.[1] Either it is true that there were ten thousand or more needles on the fir tree in Trafalgar Square last Christmas, or it is true that there were less than ten thousand needles on it. But I cannot possibly have a duty to believe either of these propositions, for I have no way of finding out which of them is true, and if I did, I might easily miscount through no fault of my own. In other words, for me to be able to have a duty to believe what is true, more is necessary than that to believe or not to believe any given statement should be within my power, just as for a doctor to have a duty to save life more is necessary than that the actions which would result in the saving of life should be within the doctor's power. If I am to have a duty to believe what is true, there must always be some technique, which it is within my power to apply, whereby I can find out which are the true propositions which I have a duty to believe; but there is not always such a technique, and, if there were, life would be too short to apply it in the case of every possible statement. Are we, then, to say that as the doctor, though he has not a duty to perform those actions which result in curing his patient, has a duty to perform those actions which he thinks will result in curing him, so we, though we do not have a duty to believe what is true, do have a duty to believe what we think is true? If so, of course, no duty to believe in God could be deduced from it, for those who thought there was no God would then have a duty to believe the statement they thought true, i.e. that there was no God. In any case, the statement that I have a duty to believe what I think true does not make sense, for if I think that a statement is true, I already believe it, and so cannot have a duty to believe it.

[1] No one, so far as I know, has held that we have a duty to believe what is true. Descartes, however, comes very close (in his fourth Meditation) to holding that we have a duty not to believe anything which is false.

I am not, of course, for one moment suggesting that because I have in general no duty to believe what is true, then I have no duty to believe that there is a God, if that is true. The general duty would imply the special one, but what follows from what is false may perfectly well be true, so the absence of the general duty does not imply the absence of the special one. However, there is a general principle to the effect that, if I have a duty in one case, but not in another, there must be some difference between the two cases, which explains why I have a duty in the one, but not in the other. If I have no duty to believe scientific truths, for example, but have a duty to believe religious ones, then there must be a difference between scientific truths and religious ones, and I should very much like to have it explained to me just what this difference is and, what is more difficult, why its presence gives rise to a duty to believe. It seems to me that any such explaining is bound to be extremely difficult to do, and one reason, though not the only reason, for this has already been mentioned. Either my duty to believe that there is a God is conditional or it is not, and either it is ubiquitous or it is not. If it is conditional, and if by mistake I think that the exceptional conditions which would cause me not to have such a duty are present, the analogy with the doctor's duty to save life seems to indicate that I have not failed to do my duty. If my duty to believe that there is a God is unconditional (as we will assume, for the sake of argument, that my duty to keep my promises is), in the case of other unconditional duties the circumstances which are the occasion of the duty (e.g. my having made a promise) may arise or may not, and if by mistake I think they have not arisen when in fact they have, the same analogy with the doctor seems to show that I have not failed to do my duty. Even if my duty to believe in God is ubiquitous in either the strong or the weak sense of "ubiquitous," I may still make a mistake in thinking that its occasion —that there is a God, or that there must be one—is present, in which case I will mistakenly think that it is not an ubiquitous duty, and in these circumstances the analogy with the doctor again seems to show that I have not failed to do my duty. Lastly, there seems to me to be at least one possible circumstance in which everyone would admit that we had not a duty to believe in God, i.e. I do not think anyone would hold that a man who knew there was no God would have a duty to believe that there was one. (Please notice that I am saying that if a man knew there was not a God, then he would not have a duty to believe that there was; I am not saying that there is no God, nor that anyone does know that there is not one.) But if anyone who knows that there is not a God will not have a duty to believe in Him, anyone who thinks he knows that there is not a God will think he has not this duty, and so, if his duty

depends on what he thinks, will not have a duty to believe that there is a God.

One way out of these difficulties—though not a way I think anyone would wish to take—is to hold that we have a duty to believe that there is a God, whether there is a God or not. Though no one, so far as I know, holds this view, some people do make remarks on this subject which could only be true if it were the case. Our duty to believe that there was a God would on this view be both unconditional and ubiquitous, and, what is more, ubiquitous in the strong sense, for, since it is always the case that either there is a God or there is not, the circumstances in which my duty to believe that there was a God would not apply could not possibly arise. For this reason, too, it would not matter what opinion one had come to concerning the existence of God, for one would have a duty to believe whatever opinion one had arrived at, and so inquiry into whether there was a God or not would be irrelevant to whether one had a duty to believe in Him. Certain paradoxical consequences would arise, however, and the two most paradoxical I can think of are these: if I knew that there was no God, I would have a duty to replace this knowledge by the false belief that there was one; and even mentally defective people would have a duty to believe that there was a God. I do not mean people unable to see for themselves reasons for thinking that there is a God, and who consequently must accept His existence on the authority of others, but people incapable of understanding what is meant by saying that there is a God, even in the inadequate way in which normal people understand this. I think that if anyone were to maintain this extraordinary view, it might well be because he was confusing it with a different and more plausible one, namely, that I have a duty to act as if there is a God, whether there is one or not.

I must now pass on to the question whether we have a duty to believe in God in the sense of acting on certain precepts and following certain recipes alleged to have emanated from Him. As far as these are concerned there is, at first sight at any rate, no difficulty, for the majority of the actions recommended or enjoined are within the power of anybody. Anyone, or almost anyone, may go to church on Sunday, get baptised, confirmed, take communion, say the creed, abstain from taking reprisals against persons who have injured him, give his goods to the poor. But perhaps our duty is not so much to perform the external actions, but to perform them with a certain spirit or in a certain manner, and this is not so easy. Anyone may say the creed or, when asked whether he believes in God or Christ, reply in the affirmative, but if our duty is not simply to say the creed or reply "Yes," but to do these believing that what we say is true; not simply not to retaliate for wrongs done us, but to do this

believing that this has been enjoined by God, whose children both we and the person who has wronged us are, then what is enjoined is not only the performance of an action, but the acceptance of a statement. In this case, all the difficulties I have already raised apply automatically to believing in God in this second sense as well as the first.

The third question, the bearing of my acceptance of the truth of the statement that there is a God, and the subsidiary doctrines of this or that particular religion, in particular the Christian religion, upon my duty to believe in God in the sense of obeying His commands and following His recipes, is an extremely complicated one, which I shall only have space to discuss much too briefly. For the sake of simplicity, I shall make what is probably a false but is certainly not a silly assumption, namely, that there is no divergence on what are purely questions of morals between those who accept the doctrines of diverging religions, and between these and atheists. For example, everyone could agree, even if in fact they do not, to the pure moral judgment that I have a duty to obey God's commands. Differences of opinion about our duties in actual situations will in this case arise only because of a difference of opinion concerning what He does command, i.e. the difference will arise not because of a difference of opinion on a question of morals, but because of an agreement of opinion on a question of morals, coupled with a difference of opinion on a matter of fact. That the ethical opinion is one which even an atheist can accept is shown by the fact that it is in form hypothetical—If God commands any action, it is one's duty to perform it—only the atheist will not think God ever does command any action, because he does not think God exists.

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that God does exist, and that He commands baptism and the taking of Holy Communion. Is a man who believes that he ought to do whatever God commands, but believes either that there is no God, or that there is a God, but that He has not commanded Baptism and the taking of Communion, failing to do his duty? Again, the analogy of the doctor, who has not failed in his duty if he performs those actions which he thinks will heal his patient, even if in fact they cause his death, would suggest that he has not failed in his duty. So we are back again where we started. A man cannot have failed to do his duty to obey God's command that a given type of action be performed unless he thinks God does issue this command, so unless he has a duty to accept the statement that he does, he cannot have a duty to obey the command. A duty to accept a statement is, as the above argument has indicated, a very odd sort of duty to have.

My argument may not have succeeded in proving anything, but I should like to end by pointing out what it certainly does

not prove, and was not intended to prove. In the first place, "duty" is not the only word used in ethical discourse, even in books on moral philosophy, which have a good deal more restricted vocabulary than ordinary people. Though to believe that there is a God may not be a duty, not to believe may nevertheless be a manifestation of a corrupt character. I can suggest the following as an argument. Everyone knows that wishful thinking sometimes occurs, and that my beliefs may be not only the product of reasoning, but of my disposition as a whole. Hence belief that God does not exist may, like any other belief, be the product of wishful thinking. In this case, if the wishes which produce it are ones which I ought not to have, disbelief in God may be evidence of a depraved disposition. For example, when Christ was asked;[1] "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied;[2] "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Now it may be that his questioner was prevented, not only from following Christ, but from believing that He was what He claimed to be, by his desire to retain worldly possessions, in which case, if desire to retain worldly possessions is a bad desire, his disbelief in Christ is evidence of a bad character. Or again, it may be that many men are prevented from believing that there is a God from a rebellious desire to make themselves independent of Him. It is true, that from their point of view, the sin of which they are guilty is not that of disobedience to God, for they do not believe that there is a God to disobey, but it may, nevertheless, be the case that, if they did believe that God existed, they would be in an uncomfortable state of conflict between desire to be independent of God, and fear of the consequences of this, and it may be that they resolve this conflict, irrationally, by ceasing to believe that there is a God who demands dependence, and exacts retribution for independence. In this case, if desire to be independent of God is a bad desire, the disbelief in God which it produces will again be evidence of a bad character. Incidentally, it is worth pointing out that the fact that a belief is evidence of a bad character does not in the least tend to show that it is false. Everybody knows that the fact that some people believe in God because they very much want there to be one does not show that their belief is false, but the converse is also true. In other words, there are some things which nice people do not know, and that there is not a God may be one of them.

Nor have I proved that disbelief in God may not have very dire consequences for the unbeliever. A pilot may not have a duty to believe that East is East and West is West, but if there is something wrong with his compass, and he goes astray, the consequences for him may be disastrous. What the argument may have shown

[1] *Luke* xviii. 18. [2] *Luke* xviii. 22.

is that, if I do not have a duty to believe in God, but evil befalls me because I do not, this evil is not a punishment for an offence, for, if I have not a duty to believe in God, I have not committed an offence if I do not believe there is one. If the unhappy consequences of my believing that there is no God, however, arise because my belief, like the pilot's, is false, a difficulty arises. In the case of human beings, who are neither omnipotent nor omniscient, the distinction between punishment and the "natural" consequences of an action is fairly easy to draw. Very roughly speaking, the consequences to a man of his actions are natural consequences if they were not brought about by other men, but as a consequence of a natural law, which man has no power to alter. But there are no natural laws which God has not power to alter, which would make it difficult, though not perhaps impossible, to distinguish between what comes about as a result of a natural law, and what God brings about as a punishment.

Lastly, I am not asserting that, if I have not a duty to believe that there is a God, Christianity is false, as it would be if it implied that I had, and in fact I had not. I do not know whether Christianity implies that we have a duty to believe in God or not. Certainly only some Christians[1] do hold that we have such a duty, and those who do not presumably think that Christianity does not imply that we have (though it does not follow that those who think we do also think that Christianity implies that we do). It is commonly held by Christians that it is only by God's grace that men believe in a distinctively Christian God, and this, I think, implies that the credit, if it may properly be called this, is God's and not theirs—I say "I think," because it may be that the credit, if I may speak in this mundane way, is divided; that it is God's, for giving them grace, and theirs, for taking advantage of it. This view, however, does not necessarily imply that belief in God is not a duty; it may be that though it is only through the grace of God that I can perform my duty to believe in God, nevertheless it is my duty, though I acquire no merit if, by grace, I perform it. Furthermore, I think it is often held that I can perform none of my duties, except through God's grace, and, in this case, the fact that I cannot believe in God without grace is not sufficient to prevent belief from being a duty; the necessity for grace would in this case imply that I had no duties at all.

Though I am not sure whether or not it is orthodox Christian doctrine to hold that belief in God is a duty, I am pretty well

[1] E.g. Newman: "Faith then is not a conclusion from premises, but the result of an act of the *will*, following upon a *conviction* that to believe is a *duty*." W. Ward: *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, p. 242, Letter to Mrs. Froude.

convinced that no Christian ought to hold, though I suspect that some do, that belief in God, and more particularly belief in Christ, is an ethically neutral question in the same sort of way that it is ethically neutral whether you think that Bacon or Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. That Christians do not suppose that it is ethically neutral is indicated, for one thing, by the fact that for belief in God they use the word "faith," and that "faith" is not, like "acceptance without inquiry" (assuming simply to drive home this particular point that this is an adequate definition of "faith") purely descriptive, but also serves to evince people's approval of what is described. "Having faith" is, furthermore, closely associated with "keeping faith," and keeping faith is generally held to be a duty. The assertion that a question is not ethically neutral, however, is a lamentably vague one for a moral philosopher to make, and I wish I could make it more precise.[1]

The University of Durham.

[1] Sometimes we say "He ought to know," but this simply means that he may reasonably be expected to know, just as "It ought to work" means "It may reasonably be expected to work." Sometimes we say "He ought to have known"; this, I think, means "He ought to have taken certain steps, which would have resulted in his knowing." We also say "He ought to believe in the Trinity"—because, say, he is an Anglican bishop, and Anglican bishops ought to believe in the Trinity. This does not, as it seems, imply a duty to believe, but a duty not to be an Anglican bishop if you do not believe.

PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY

PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE

THE eighth Congrès des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française at Toulouse, which, I should perhaps explain, was the first gathering of its sort to which I have been, was just about as unlike a Joint Session as an English philosopher might well have imagined it to be. Many of the differences arose naturally from the simple facts that French philosophy is very unlike British and that philosophers in France are greeted with banquets, civic receptions, concerts and other hospitable entertainments when they meet together in congress. But there are other differences too. For one thing, the contributions are not only as a rule very different in content; they are also different in form. A general theme (a very general theme) is set with a certain number of sub-headings. Then anybody who wishes may submit a "communication," having if possible at least some appearance of relevance to the titular theme—though if this is not possible, it doesn't seem to matter very much as it may be included all the same. Obviously enough, if some share of the available space and time is to be given to every philosopher who wants it, (and in France, where philosophy is a school subject, there are a very great number of philosophers), nobody is going to get very much. The result of all this is to be seen for this year in the Acts of the Congress *L'Homme et son prochain* (Presses Universitaires), where hardly any of the no less than 76 contributors has more than four pages to himself. (At the Congress itself, the author of each such communication was allocated $\frac{3}{4}$ hour for exposition and discussion. The five addresses which were given at full length before the whole assembly meeting together, and which included one superb performance in the manner of a philosophic chansonnier, are not included in this volume, but are to be published separately.) In the circumstances it would have been wholly surprising if such Acts had turned out to be anything other than a mainly tedious assortment of mostly undistinguished fragments, which is not, I fear, likely to prove of much interest to any reader of this Survey; which is a pity, as it is not only the receptions and the outings that make this Congress worth attending.

One of the ways in which French and British philosophy differ, which was particularly noticeable at this Congress, was that in which so much of French philosophy is as literary as so much French literature is—more notoriously—philosophic. This is, no doubt, very much a matter of training and curriculum; but the tendency has naturally been accentuated by the widespread acceptance in one form or another of the phenomenologist programme, aiming as it does at the description of situations rather than at the elucidation of puzzles. Gabriel Marcel was not in fact at Toulouse, but the in-betweenness of his position is fairly indicated in the title of Edgard Sottiaux's book *Gabriel Marcel—Philosophe et dramaturge* (Nauwelaerts). Anyone wanting an account of his philosophy but shrinking, very naturally, before the formidable weight of Father Trois-

fontaines's two massively definitive volumes, could do very much worse than turn to Sottiaux's incomparably shorter work. It is not only short, but also remarkably clear; and includes helpfully and appropriately by way of illustration extended analyses of two of Marcel's most important plays, analyses that are certified by the dramaturge himself. Sottiaux, like Troisfontaines whom he follows closely, is an if not totally uncritical yet devoted admirer of Marcel, who once again is quoted in the introduction as being in turn an admirer of his admirer. Marcel's strength, and it is a genuine strength, lies in his concern with and acutely perceptive understanding of certain sorts of relationships between individual and individual; (one must add that from his point of view such understanding involves *ipso facto* some understanding of their further relations with God). On the other hand, however, he lacks almost any appreciation of the political and economic problems of modern society, in which his main interest seems to be a frequently reiterated dislike of nearly everything to do with technology. At the same time, curiously enough, as I was reading Sottiaux's meticulously respectful exegesis, I came across an article in *L'Express* by François Mauriac, whom no one could accuse of a lack of interest in either individuals or God, sternly rebuking Marcel for his attitude in support of the arrest and imprisonment of André Mandouze—a professor of Classics who had maintained his contacts with the Algerian rebels—and in general for his lack of political awareness; and I am bound to confess that I found this, however unfairly, a welcome contrast to the atmosphere of a select mutual admiration society occupied with the analysis of intimate personal relations.

There is, I take it, no need to elaborate on what might be called Marcel's more strictly philosophic weaknesses. The truth of the matter is that though he does indeed talk in one sort of philosophic idiom, he is according to current British standards not so much a poor philosopher as no sort of philosopher at all. Nor, according to these standards, would he want to be. But though he is undoubtedly often repetitive and incoherent, it would be absurd to deny any merit in his sort of semi-systematic meditation upon the "human situation" simply because it is not something else. And anyhow the terms in which it may be possible to meditate upon personal relationships present themselves a great many intriguing conceptual problems. I suppose, incidentally, that if he wished to write in any of the British philosophic journals, *Philosophy* is one in which Marcel might feel more or less at home; hardly *Mind*, and quite certainly not *Analysis*.

British philosophers may on the whole be more tough-minded and rigorous, but it is French philosophers on the whole who show the greater concern with problems that "really" matter, that is to say with problems that matter to non-philosophers too. This, odd though it may seem, leads me to recommend yet another book on Hegel and Marx. There are hardly likely to be many more philosophers in this country who will want, as philosophers, to study any sort of commentary on these two writers than there will be who want to study a commentary on Marcel; but those who do will find few commentators so learned and—within the peculiar limits of the subject—so lucid as Jean Hyppolite. Perhaps

"lucid" is the wrong word to apply to his *Études sur Marx et Hegel* (Marcel Rivière). This book collects together articles which have appeared in a number of different places over the years 1946–1952, with one article from as early as 1936. None of them are easy, and in most there are passages where the thread becomes so difficult to follow that the non-Hegelian, such as myself, feels as though he were trying to find his way through a darkened labyrinth by clinging on to a black cotton. All the same, the effort, baffling though much of it may be, is worth while. In the first place, perhaps, for the way in which Hyppolite brings out the nature and extent of the well-known but often underestimated influence that Hegel had upon Marx. For Marx, Hyppolite points out, philosophy was Hegelian philosophy; there can be no proper understanding of Marx without some knowledge of Hegel. The concept of dialectic, the concept of alienation are well-known examples of this influence; but one that is possibly even more important is provided by the Marxist doctrine of the unity of theory and practice, a doctrine which is among the leading obstacles in the way of mutual comprehension between Marxist and non-Marxist philosophers. So often this doctrine is in effect interpreted—and not only by non-Marxists—as a crude mixture of pragmatism and political opportunism. But in fact its philosophical sense (or at any rate intention) is to be found, as Hyppolite convincingly shows, in the final reconciliation of opposites that Hegel's own use of the dialectic failed on Marx's view to provide. The articles on Marx are perhaps those which are most immediately interesting, but the majority are not in fact directly concerned with him at all, but deal with Hegel alone: Hegel's attitude to history, in particular the French Revolution; Hegel's view of human existence and self-awareness; Hegel's idea of logic. It all remains, no doubt, a tremendous and extraordinary jumble; mad and maddening in one way, but at the same time immensely intelligent. From this intelligence Hyppolite is one of the very few who know how to withdraw some part of its disguise of near unintelligibility—though it would have been helpful if he had made clearer the extent to which he is himself for his own part committed to Hegelian terminology and doctrine. (There is a small typographical jumble which it may be worth noting in passing; the fifth line of page 149 makes an advance appearance on page 148 to the mystifying exclusion of the line it there replaces.)

A complete and by this time extremely welcome change from the world of phenomenology and dialectic is provided by *Les catégories de la modalité* by André Darbon (Presses Universitaires). This consists of a course of eighteen lectures delivered in the University of Bordeaux in 1940–41, edited for publication by Madeleine Lagarce-Darbon. They are brief, calm and clear; and the final lecture in which Darbon looks back on a lifetime of study and teaching of philosophy is a beautifully simple piece of writing. Anyone who finds himself talking too easily of the gulf between philosophy in France and philosophy in Britain should read the examination of the notion of necessity which is the first part of this book; the language is French and Malebranche is cited rather than Hume in support of the familiar empiricist point about the non-observability of necessary causal connections, but the climate of the discussion, with its constant

insistence on a carefully documented understanding of the meaning of the terms one employs, will be familiar to every English philosopher. Darbon is noticeably less incisive or convincing on the concepts of possibility and existence (or reality). But his book, though it contains little that may be new to English philosophers in 1957, remains a pleasure to read.

La morale de Kant by Joseph Vialatoux (Presses Universitaires) is an even shorter book. It is published in the series "Initiation philosophique" and is intended as an introduction to its subject. The idea of starting with a brief sketch of the main positions of the whole critical philosophy is surely right; but not, obviously, easy. In the event, it seems incredible that any beginner who *is* a beginner should really master this initiation, in which a whole battery of terms such as "transcendental" is flung at him with little or no explanation. However, like so many introductions which are too difficult to fulfil their declared purpose in a wholly satisfactory way, this one will make an excellent and stimulating re-introduction to Kant for someone who is not a complete beginner. It is avowedly only an exposition; but it is one that makes at the same time a deliberate plea on Kant's behalf against possible (Catholic?) prejudice. As a result, no doubt, there is sometimes a tendency for difficulties and inconsistencies to be ironed out more easily than the text might warrant; and there are curious passages such as that in which the Catholic doctrine on abortion receives an apparent justification in purely Kantian terms. Nevertheless, this is far more important, Kant's grandeur comes unmistakably through.

There are, of course, certain recurrent and inescapable difficulties confronting anyone undertaking to write any part of the history of philosophy. The nature of these problems forms one of the central topics of *La philosophie de l'histoire de la philosophie* (J. Vrin), a collection of articles by both French and Italian authors. These articles, whose standard varies very considerably, are in fact concerned with a number of different aspects of the history of philosophy, the title of the volume belonging rather to the opening (and also, as it happens, to the fourth) article rather than to any theme which might link them all together. The neatest, not surprisingly, is that by Henri Gouhier on two opposite but complementary ways of writing history. On the one hand the historian may try to avoid any interpretative element as extraneous to the facts, which he regards it as his business to record as nearly as possible in the way in which they might have appeared to someone of the period in question; or he may, on the other hand, take deliberate advantage of his perspective and completer knowledge to construct an account of what has happened that no contemporary could possibly have given. Thus he stands, as it were, between the chronicler and the "philosopher of history"; (or, from another point of view, between the chronicler and the sociologist). Here he must remain as long as he is to remain an historian; he may never adopt one outlook alone at the total expense of the other. The other most striking article is the final, vigorous, somewhat chaotic paper by Franco Lombardi. It is a passionate, philosophically almost flamboyant defence of a down-to-earth, common sense, view of man, and of his thought as essentially corrigible.

On *La structure algébrique des théories mathématiques* by L. Henkin (Gauthier-Villars) Mr. G. B. Keene reports as follows: "In this monograph Henkin elucidates the relationship between logic and Boolean algebras. The importance of the relationship lies in the fact that it makes it possible (as Tarski has shown) to solve algebraical problems by purely logical means. Developing this point, Henkin defines a new class of algebras ('Cylindrical Algebras') and shows how, by the use of logical techniques, the relations between these algebras and the mathematical theories to which they correspond, can be exhibited. He suggests, finally, that by constructing further similar, but higher-level, algebras, a new and untapped source of information about mathematical theories becomes available." As for *Le rôle médiateur de la logique* by Herman Meyer (Van Gorcum-Assen), it is not particularly long, but so much variegated ground is covered with such kaleidoscopic rapidity that it is not easy to say exactly what the book is about. It is clear that Meyer knows a great deal about mathematics and logic and throughout the book one comes across passages of interest and of insight; there is, however, no steady development of the argument or arguments, but rather a discussion that no sooner settles on one topic than it jumps to the next. As far as I can identify one main theme it is that logic and mathematics derive their sense from the experience, basic and common to all men, of a "maintenant toujours présent" and the ordered changes that take place within it; it is by reference to this, for example, that it is possible to distinguish between an empty formal calculus and one with a definite mathematical sense. As to the title, it is true that Dr. Meyer announces on page 170 that "Le rôle de la logique est d'opérer la médiation entre le présent toujours vécu et le 'pas encore vécu', afin de vaincre la passivité née de la crainte de l'inconnu et de trouver le courage d'agir"; but this seems neither particularly illuminating in itself nor a very fair sample to give as representative of the book as a whole.

I should mention finally two books that are each the forerunner of one or more others by the same authors. *La vocation de Descartes* (Presses Universitaires) is but the first of four books on Descartes by Roger Lefèvre that are due to appear. The plan of this one is, says Lefèvre in his preface, "simple: la première partie s'efforce de raconter l'histoire du Discours, les trois autres de contrôler l'histoire que le Discours raconte." This plan is, if perhaps a trifle repetitively, duly carried out. To those who are interested the book should in fact prove interesting. *Essai d'une philosophie premiere: l'exigence idéaliste et l'exigence morale—Tome premier, la pensée* (Presses Universitaires) is the first volume (of two) of another course of lectures given in 1940–41, this time the last one given by Edouard Le Roy at the Collège de France. It is of considerable length—the second volume is apparently to be about as long—and sets out in a clear and unhurried way an idealist theory of knowledge. The book is pleasant to read and is a distinguished, very professional example of its own style of philosophy; but it is inevitable that it should have about it something of the air of a period piece.

ALAN MONTEFIORE.

DISCUSSION

THINKING AND MACHINES

The claims that Dr. F. H. George (*Philosophy*, April 1957, p. 168) makes on behalf of his machines are obscurely stated. Does he claim (1) that a machine has been made and has actually produced a kind of response which is incalculable, given the specification to which it has been built and also the prescribed conditions, what is put in for the particular performance in question? "Incalculable" does not mean that nobody has bothered to calculate, but that somebody has bothered, that the calculations show that the response in question is not among the calculated ones, that it is not chance or mechanical breakdown, but a specific response to something specific among the given conditions. If he could substantiate this claim, then I would reluctantly agree that some machines are cleverer and more thoughtful than I thought possible, and some men sillier and less thoughtful, for they deliberately design machines to do they know not what.

Dr. George lays stress on machines that are said to "learn," as instances of incalculable machine behaviour. I do not doubt that a machine has been made which can, for example, run through a maze by the shortest route after trials in which longer routes were taken to begin with; and this appears to be what he calls "learning." I very much doubt whether Dr. George has compared the machine "learning" curves (improvement of performance plotted against number of trials) with genuine learning curves of animals and children. These genuine curves are infinite in variety however rigidly external conditions are controlled, and incalculable in detail, yet they can be classified as belonging to types and the variations are not pure chance variations. I venture to predict that his machine "learning" curves are quite calculable in detail, limited in variety apart from random imperfections in the machine, and recognizably different from the genuine kind. In short the "learning" of the machine is a partial and clumsy imitation of something far more complex, done by different means and done better. The machine is a toy; its performance does not show that it thinks, but that its inventor thinks too little.

However, Dr. George's claim may be (2), that some enthusiastic inventor has a machine on paper which the inventor claims would behave as above under (1), if it were built and set going successfully. This claim is "science fiction" and nobody need worry about it. Or does he merely claim (3), that a machine's performance may be incalculable until we know the particular conditions under which it is performing? Or is he saying (4), that it is the machine that cannot do the calculation? Even this last interpretation is possible, seeing that Dr. George devotes nearly half his note to speculating about the introspective psychology of hypothetical machines.

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A. D. RITCHIE.

George's reply to Professor Ritchie[1] prompts me to correct some of his misconceptions of my position.[2] I will not catalogue them in detail but merely touch on the more important ones. He appears to assume that I was putting forward an unalloyed form of introspectionism, and that this was my main

[1] "Thinking and Machines," *Philosophy* (April 1957) referred to in text as G2.
[2] "Could Machines be made to think?" *Philosophy* (July 1956) referred to in text as G1.

argument against Turing. Further, he implies that I believe that it is in principle impossible to construct a machine which will simulate human behaviour and to have feelings and consciousness. Far from being an enemy of progress I contemplated the possibility of robots developing inner lives of their own and, if George's fancy moves that way, I would even include machines which "wink at girls and *mean* it."

I also indicated that if we were able to construct a "machine" which "thinks," we would have to stretch our present-day meaning of these terms, and that the question whether "machines can think" depends to some extent upon how broadly or narrowly these key terms are taken. I further argued that even if we could construct a machine whose behaviour was indistinguishable from that of a human being, it might still be useful to distinguish between men produced by natural methods and artificial men. Society might find it necessary to introduce some sort of *apartheid*. George seems to give the impression that I overlooked all this.

George's basic strategy of argumentation is to assert baldly that in principle a machine could perform this or that activity, and then to proceed to dwell on the difficulty of his opponent proving the opposite. "Who is to say that we cannot, in principle, build a machine that has the same emotions that humans have?" (G2, p. 169). One can, of course, always imagine qualities which a machine might have which would bring it closer to a human being. Clearly, the only limit to this sort of thing is the flexibility of one's imagination. George seems to assume that because a thing is abstractly possible, which is usually trivial, that it is hence also practically possible. As I pointed out, there are no logical reasons why the most fantastic things should not happen, but there may be excellent practical reasons against their happening. Man is probably the most economic exemplification of himself. George also transfers to his opponents the task of proving the negative of his own assertions, overlooking that a negative proof is by its own nature hardly attainable.

But I will not press such formal points. Let me consider another matter. In my article[1] I took Turing at his word that he was talking about digital computers, and criticized his view that they could, within the near future—say fifty years—simulate thought activities. I was therefore not primarily concerned with "inductive" machines. George may chide me for not dealing with them but there was no reason for my doing so in this particular context. One might just as well rebuke the author of a work on steam locomotives for not discussing the internal combustion engine. As far as "inductive" machines and other cybernetic fauna are concerned, I have elsewhere[2] indicated that they suffer from related disabilities. I do not think that the elasticity thus introduced helps very much. Such machines as at present constituted, do not seem to "learn" or "perform inferences" in the same way as humans do. I am certainly not against the use of models in the behavioural sciences, as long as one does not transmogrify them into new varieties of animals.

George does not seem to have grasped my main objection to Turing's position, namely, that the way a digital computer solved logical problems was essentially different from the way in which a human being set about them. This also applies to his "learning" devices. According to George, Turing's interpretation of thinking in terms of deductive processes is more in keeping with what we should mean by thinking "if we were careful to strip off the relative irrelevancies of sources" (G1, p. 246). This is precisely the point at issue: what I take to be of importance in this context, George considers to be a relative irrelevancy. Further, my argument is in no way dependent

[1] "Can Machines Think?" *Philosophy* (April 1952).
[2] "Minds and Machines," *Listener* (December 27, 1956).

upon an appeal to introspection; it would still hold if we restricted ourselves to observed behaviour.

George seems to assume that I believe that thought is in some mysterious way dependent upon feeling, whereas I would regard these two "blanket" terms as referring rather to polar concepts. I was questioning whether one can speak of pure thought as such. Like the scholastics before him, George looks on the emotive and conative aspects of thought as being only incidentally connected with the thinking process, merely acting as perturbatory agents.

Or consider the Mind-Body problem; I contended that there was not the simple isomorphism between psychological and physiological events, so often assumed in cybernetic discussions. As far as thought is concerned, we do not know very much about the corresponding neural process, and it might not help us very much if we did. Even on the McCulloch-Pitts oversimplified model, it might be so complex that it would be simpler to use our introspections or observable behaviour. Despite the inadequacy of our introspections they have so far told us more about thinking than have computing machines.

This brings me to a rather dubious assumption which seems to be taken as an article of faith by George and others, namely, that any conceivable form of behaviour, including thought, can be described completely and unambiguously in words, which description could then be mechanized. As I pointed out, the basic postulate underlying the digital computing machine analogy is that thinking operates in the form of an atomic system, and that the logic of our atomic propositions reflects it. But it is certainly not self-evident that all types of thought and behaviour may be thus specified. Even if one accepts this assumption as Von Neumann himself admits, it would only apply to every element separately and "that it is far from clear how it would apply to the entire syndrome of behaviour."[1]

George, however, challenges us to give details of activities that human beings can perform and machines cannot, since "in giving the details you are in fact describing the mechanism that we may then build" (G2, p. 169). But when George asks for details he is asking for a finite description in words. It is plainly not the case that there is a simple one-one correspondence between language and our other kinds of behaviour. By its very nature language is limited to a finite number of discrete letters and the words formed from them, whereas the possible variation of thought and behaviour is literally infinite. Take, for example, Turing's conception of a universal machine (from which the above dogma is derived) which when fed with a description defining a specific automaton will thereby function like the automaton described. Without invoking a Maxwellian demon, one could always conceive that the feeding in of any such description might immediately alter the nature of the machine and cause it to function otherwise. This sort of behaviour would be rather analogous to the reactions of an organism under stimulation.

One of my main points against Turing was that he was using metaphorically words which in everyday discourse had a definite subjective content to describe the physical operations of computing machines. George does much the same thing when he speaks of physical devices which can (or could) decide, choose, learn, count, classify, generalize, deal with unforeseen situations and suffer emotional difficulties. If George were to eliminate the customary associations which these words have, by redefining them neutrally, the analogy between mechanisms and human beings would lose a good deal of its force and persuasiveness.

On the other hand, he describes human activities in terms of the more specialized and restricted language of computing theory. We are told that,

[1] *Cerebral Mechanisms in Behaviour: The Hixon Symposium* (1951), p. 23.

just as a machine only does what it is programmed to do, the same may be said of humans. "The fact that human programming may be complex and derived from many sources is nothing to the point" (G2, p. 169). Human beings on such a view are apparently to be regarded as "constructed" by a biological process just as machines are constructed by a mechanical process, and as doing precisely what is built into them. Education thus becomes a form of programming. All this is strangely reminiscent of the attitude of the Port Royal *savants* who referred to the cries and howls of the animals during vivisection experiments as the creaking of the broken-down animal machine. However, a programme in computing practice usually has a systematic character, and is concerned with our coding of the machine operations in terms of arithmetical and logical concepts. Such operations may, of course, be modelled on our more simplified forms of logico-arithmetical behaviour, such as counting on our fingers. Now, though the programming could conceivably be done by another machine, we would finally find ourselves back again to a programme inserted by a human being. The alternative to this position seems to be some sort of infinite regress in which meta-machine is heaped on meta-machine.

In such discussions as "Can (or could) machines think?" there is a certain danger in talking about machines in general, as we tend to conjure up a Platonic universal, having none of the practical disabilities of any existing machine. The whole discussion does not then refer to actual concrete machines doing a specific job of work, but rather to ideal machines or pieces of logic. As no particular machine is specified in detail, we are told nothing about its practical possibilities, which is essential if we are to assess the feasibility of any one specific project, such as constructing George's machine which "winks at a girl and *means* it." George seems to agree with me when he says "the appropriate way of treating such matters is to carry through empirical projects to see what can in fact be done" (G2, p. 169).

Finally, it is interesting to note that George believes that logic is closely related to human thinking "in that it represents the ideal, best ordered and most complete of thinking processes" (G1, p. 249). He further argues that philosophical matters can be effectively reconstructed in terms of a theory of behaviour. Turing and others have tried to define thought processes in terms of formal machine states or logic. Such logical systems, for that is all they are on this level, have apparently now for George, to be interpreted as a form of behaviour. But this is merely to repeat what I stressed in my article that such machines have ultimately to be related to human activities, which is clearly inconsistent with George's championing of Turing and his condemnation of myself.

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NEW BOOKS

The Modern Predicament. A Study in the Philosophy of Religion. (Based on the Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of St. Andrews.) By H. J. Paton. (London: Allen and Unwin. 1955. Pp. 405. Price 30s.)

Prof. H. J. Paton is the most distinguished living British philosopher who has never wavered in his devoted, but not uncritical, allegiance to the teachings of Kant; and in his Gifford Lectures it is, as one would expect, from an essentially Kantian standpoint that he discusses the fundamental challenges to a religious interpretation of experience presented by representative strains of thought today. The book covers a wide ground, but even more impressive than its comprehensive scope is the author's candour, and his determination to give full weight to the arguments he criticizes and the points of view which he cannot fully accept. One even has the impression that his own thought is so far from rigid that it grows or changes in certain matters in the course of the lectures; which is perhaps an unfair suspicion, but is a testimony to the lecturer's receptiveness to light from whatever quarter it comes. Yet where an opposition is fundamental, it is noted with trenchancy and without evasion, and in these cases the author does not pull his punches.

The Modern Predicament is—one cannot here improve upon the wording of the dust-cover—that "of men, and especially religious men, living in an age of scientific specialism and in a world wholly different from that in which religion had its birth and growth," and the book is addressed not so much to professional philosophers as to "all thoughtful men who are affected by modern discontents." But the author has to deal at the outset with two "vetoes" coming, the first from within the ranks of philosophy itself, and the second from a school of theologians. The first, the "linguistic veto," is the contention that the real business of philosophy is to clarify and render consistent the language we use in discussing our experiences and that statements about matters outside the world of ordinary experience are really an abuse of language and to that extent not meaningful as statements. To this it is clearly yet respectfully urged that the conception of what a language should be and what a "statement" should convey may beg the very questions that are at issue; to accept your critic's "language" "may commit you to the very propositions you wish to deny." Our subject is religion rather than religious language, and no opinion as to the character which a statement must have if it is to deserve the name need deter us from searching human experience of every kind for light as to the meaning of religion.

Paton is no less decided in rejecting the "theological veto" of Karl Barth and his adherents. You cannot argue against this "Theological Positivism" *with* its exponents for they reject *in toto* the claim of rational thinking to be relevant to religious faith. Barth's "absolute ban upon every kind of natural theology" (i.e. upon the frank discussion of religion and the assessment of its claims) is rooted in a profound mistrust of the human mind's capacity in this field. "The most extreme prohibitions are those that spring from fear."

The way is now clear for a philosophical assessment of religion, its aberrations, the impediments in its path and the responses to the challenges they present, the factors in experience whether normal or exceptional (e.g. mystical experience) which have been regarded as of special religious significance, and the traditional types of "argument" which have been brought to support the claims of Theism, and in particular Christian Theism. Twelve chapters are given to these themes before we come to what Paton, as anyone to whom

the teaching of Kant is crucial on this matter, regards as of central import; the religious man's experience as a moral being. Naturally the author's own interpretation and valuation of religion is developed through the book, and it would be unfair to expect him (or indeed anyone) to comprise it in a couple of sentences. Otherwise one might cavil at the statement (p. 98) that "religion is for simple people and so must itself be simple" and may be described as "worship, dedication and trust." ("Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat.") Might one not as well say that "warfare" must be simple and might be described as drill, discipline and loyalty? Religion must manifestly be meaningful for simple people if it has any relevance to life at all; that need not mean that it may not have heights and depths of meaning which the greatest compass of mind cannot exhaust.

I have no space to deal with the many wise and penetrating comments in these early chapters, but I cannot omit reference to the brief dismissal of "the way of absurdity" (p. 119), i.e. the repudiation of reason, the glorying rather in the irrationality of religion, which Paton finds embodied supremely in Kierkegaard. This is one of the instances of his uncompromising asperity of comment, in my opinion completely justified. It is high time that we ceased to confront the resounding proclamations of the *Credo quia absurdum* with the paralysed awe of rabbits before a python; and the same is true with respect to some contemporary existentialist thinkers to whom Paton does not in this volume refer.

Of the next three chapters (9–11), the first considers the attempt of Rudolf Otto in *The Idea of the Holy* to give an ampler account of the "phenomenology" of normal religious experience than theology had been able to do. Here Paton's commendation and adverse criticism are both I think in the main just. The popularity today of the words "numinous" and the "mysterium tremendum" is evidence that Otto supplied something that was lacking; yet it is certainly true that his analysis is obscure in parts and suffers from a tiresomely loose use of Kantian terminology which hides sometimes confusion in his own interpretation.

Paton next considers the claims that may justly be made by the interpreter of religion for the experience of the mystics, taking here as his expositor of mysticism the work of the French Jesuit Fr. Poulain (Eng. Tr. *The Graces of Interior Prayer*). His conclusion, again I think not to be questioned, is that "a dispassionate decision must ultimately turn, not on the mode of reception, but on the positive content of the mystic vision as conveyed to us, however dimly, by analogies and images." And this is only to be judged "by its continuity with ordinary religious experience" and perhaps also with poetry, philosophical reflections and moral aspirations (p. 159).

The third of these three chapters is concerned with the contribution of Martin Buber in his book *Ich und Du*, a memorable vindication of the central position in religion of the experience of direct encounter between worshipper and worshipped. But in elaborating his thesis, Buber falls perhaps inevitably into exaggeration and onesidedness. Paton's (most respectful) criticisms are cogent. Is it not enough to say that the contrast of the "I-Thou" with the "I-It" relationship seems to beg the question by using a pronoun ("it") which can hardly bear any meaning even as the object of a religious affirmation, let alone the object of worship? We may none the less feel that the religious experience must include such affirmations; that it must admit the *Magnificat* as well as the *Te Deum*.

I have no space to touch on the treatment in the next chapters of the traditional historic "arguments" for religion, a well-worn road, on which if the conclusions reached are not original (how indeed could they be?) there is fresh statement of familiar positions and many originalities in detail.

But the centre of gravity of the book is of course in the later chapters, where in one form or another Paton is grappling with the significance of man's moral experience for the claims of religion. On the whole he does not swerve far from the Kantian position, or at least the Kantian tradition, but he is free from the pedantries of Kant's austere moralism. He does not, e.g., accept Kant's admission of determinism in ordinary non-moral behaviour as being compatible with the freedom of the moral will. His Kantianism is a conviction that has sustained not without signs of its ordeal the tempests of positivist and scientific scepticism of a century and a half. Yet its firmness is fundamentally unshaken. The "as ifs" of religious faith "are not the result of inference; but they may become convictions which are confirmed . . . by the course of action in which he is engaged." I believe that this distinction between beliefs that are demonstrated by proofs and those that show themselves "proof" by the continual corroborations of relevant experience is of crucial importance. Let me end this account with one of the author's concluding remarks, which shows his sympathy with what is sound in the existentialist note in contemporary religious philosophy. ". . . The question of religion . . . is not one of theory: it is a question of the life a man is going to lead. This is a matter for personal decision and personal commitment in a world of which we can know only the surface appearance, although there is no need to surround this with an atmosphere of portentousness and despair. . . ."

This book is a notable addition to the famous series of Gifford lectures: impressive in its penetration, generous in its openmindedness, astringent in its frankness, firm in its fundamental conviction.

JOHN W. HARVEY.

The Structure of Metaphysics. By MORRIS LAZEROWITZ. International Library of Psychology and Philosophy. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955. Pp. xiii + 280. Price 25s.)

Six of these essays were first published in English journals, three in America, and three are new. They are all very much in the English tradition. Professor Lazerowitz is especially concerned with his agreements and disagreements with G. E. Moore; and it might be said that the main theme of these essays arises out of his and Miss Ambrose's contributions to the Schilpp volume of 1942. There is also much evidence of the influence of Professor Wisdom, who contributes a Foreword, and a close similarity with the views expressed in some of the earlier papers of Margaret Macdonald. Bradley, Stout, Russell and Ayer all come in; of contemporary American philosophy there is hardly a trace.

Professor Lazerowitz tackles many of the central metaphysical questions: universals, substratum, appearance and reality, negative terms, the paradoxes of motion, the nature of self-contradiction and of logical necessity. The author deals with these topics in detail, and also has an interest in the question: "What are metaphysical questions?" This is the theme of the well-known paper on "Moore's paradox" which opens the present series; and of a long new essay on "The Nature of Metaphysics." His view is illustrated in his *method* of attacking each question; a method which certainly yields results. The essays are difficult and rewarding, exciting and exacting.

In tackling a metaphysical problem, Lazerowitz shows first of all what it is not. (1) It is not a question of fact to be decided by hypothesis or observation. Hume professed that he could not find the idea of substance: but reflection shows that he could not really have looked for it (p. 153). (2) A philosophical

statement cannot be construed as a logically necessary proposition which is "about the world"; nor can problems in philosophy be solved by pure deduction. "Its logic is not the logic of logic and arithmetic" (Wisdom). (3) Philosophical theories are not verbal statements either: they are not claims about the proper or correct or established usage of expressions. Here Lazerowitz echoes Wisdom's view that Moore's analysis does not really offer solutions to philosophical questions: that the old quarrels flare up again over which is the "correct" analysis.

(4) Metaphysical statements are not nonsensical. Those who claim that they are, are inventing a new and metaphysical sense of "nonsense."

What then are philosophical statements, hypotheses, theories? What sort of question are they meant to answer? Lazerowitz holds that philosophical theories are ways of recommending *innovations* in ordinary language. E.g. (1) The view that change is unreal is a defence of a novel and peculiar use of "change" and is not incompatible with the facts of life. (2) The view that there is a substrate underlying all the properties of a thing, arises from an innovation in the use of a general name. (The predicate of "This is a mouse" is to be regarded as adjectival—like "is brown," yet the subject-predicate form is to be *retained*. What then is to be the subject? What is it that is a mouse? Answer: an unknown somewhat.)

Lazerowitz accepts "Moore's paradox" and goes on to assert another as a corollary of it. According to Moore, philosophers who hold metaphysical theories such as that time is unreal, also *know* empirical propositions which are inconsistent with their own theory. Wisdom and others have held that if this is the case, the metaphysician cannot be *refuted* by an appeal to common knowledge, such as that there are race-meetings which come after breakfast and before tea. Lazerowitz argues that if we suppose that the metaphysical problem is after all about the meanings of words, there is the paradox that metaphysicians know as much an anyone else about "time" and "change" and "apparent" and "real." They do not (as Logical Positivists have argued) *misunderstand* ordinary language. Hence their theories cannot be refuted simply *by an appeal to ordinary usage*. Nominalists and Realists, Rationalists and Empiricists, Black and White, already know about ordinary usage and yet continue to dispute their questions. For example, Mill knew as well as anyone else that the laws of arithmetic are necessary and the generalizations of biology are not: he could apply the description "logically necessary" without difficulty. And yet he argued that the laws of arithmetic are empirical generalizations. This could not possibly be due to a silly mistake on his part: rather it was an attempt to revise "philosophical" language—a deliberate and innovating attempt (p. 258). Again, philosophers who maintain that universals are entities which can be in many places at the same time know perfectly well that "entity" is in fact so used as to make this statement meaningless. Yet they make it in order to *introduce* a new philosopical sense of "entity" which they feel the need of. Moore's "refutation" of the metaphysicians is somehow beside the point. His defence of ordinary usage is itself a counter-proposal in metaphysics. See Moore's own answer to Lazerowitz in *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, p. 675.

Why should these innovations appeal so strongly to some metaphysicians—and be so strongly repugnant to others? Lazerowitz, like Wisdom, gives a two-fold answer. (1) The new usage serves to bring out features of ordinary language which the philosopher has noticed and which somehow ordinary language tends to conceal. Lazerowitz shows great insight and ingenuity in discovering just what the features are, upon which particular metaphysical problems turn. (2) In many cases (if not in all) the metaphysical innovations

spring from emotional sources: they are consciously enjoyed or repudiated but only secretly understood. Thus "change is unreal" has to do with the repudiation of death—my death: "things are but appearances" connects with a "turning away from reality." Lazerowitz sometimes seems to hold that it is characteristic of all metaphysical theories that they have these unconscious causes: but in the detailed exposition he does not always prove it. For example, the question whether self-contradictory statements have meaning is capable of three answers: (1) they have meaning; (2) they are meaningless; (3) they have meanings which we cannot conceive. And the author shows that the first two answers serve to bring out different criteria of meaning: (*a*) an expression has meaning if it can be used as a description; (*b*) if it can give rise to deductions. The discussion of the first two views is syntactical, and one has the impression that Lazerowitz's account would indeed *satisfy* both these protagonists. It is only in the case of the third view that one can see that it not only rests on the same conflicting considerations as (1) and (2), but also springs from an appetite for mystery. It is interesting to note that Wisdom, in his foreword, tries to emphasize the rational considerations which underlie metaphysical theories—without, of course, actually *denying* the unconscious motives. In the book, Lazerowitz lays great emphasis upon this "deepest layer" of metaphysical thought.

In his foreword, Wisdom maintains that Lazerowitz's view (that philosophical theories are verbal innovations) is itself a philosophical theory—itself, therefore, a verbal innovation. Does it illuminate? Wisdom says (truly, I think) that such a theory is liable to influence the doing of philosophy in a more marked way than philosophical theories about mathematics influence the doing of mathematics. I am not sure that Lazerowitz himself regards his thesis as a philosophical theory. It is of course a theory about philosophical statements; but is it acknowledged to be a philosophical theory? On the last page of the book, Lazerowitz opens a paragraph with the words: "If our concern is not the philosophical one of inventing new ways of speaking which will minimize or heighten points of similarity and dissimilarity between types of sentences but is the less spectacular concern of trying to see how our language works . . ." (276). And I doubt very much whether he would recognize that his main thesis invents a new way of speaking.

It is interesting to compare this thesis with Conventionalism which he rejects. This is the view that logically necessary propositions (e.g. All fleas are insects) are "really verbal." Lazerowitz holds that this *invents* a new sense for "verbal" in order to bring out a most important connection between logically necessary propositions and empirical propositions about the ordinary usage of words. This is an invented sense, for in the ordinary sense of "verbal" it is obvious that necessary propositions are not verbal; and if we were to understand Conventionalism to be using "verbal" in its ordinary sense, then we should have to call it a *false* theory. And indeed Lazerowitz does call it false and offers several different arguments to show that it is false (270). In one such argument he compares "All fleas are insects" (1) with "All fleas jump" (2). To each there corresponds a genuinely verbal statement: " 'Insect' applies to everything to which 'flea' applies" (1a); " 'Jumps' applies to whatever 'flea' applies to" (2a). In Lazerowitz's view the second pair ((1a) and (2a)) are empirical and both are in fact true. It is quite clear that (2) and (2a) are different propositions: no one would pretend to identify them. Why should (1) and (1a) be identified? Because there is a relation between (1) and (1a) which does not hold between (2) and (2a). "All fleas are insects" does not express the fact about word-usage which (1a) expresses; but it is this verbal fact which we know in understanding "All fleas are insects"; it is this verbal

fact which makes (1) express a necessary proposition—which justifies us in asserting that all fleas are insects. One cannot understand (1) without knowing it to be necessarily true—i.e. without knowing that (1a) is *in fact* true. On the other hand one can understand "All fleas jump" without knowing it to be true and without knowing that its verbal correlate is true. Indeed one could know (2a) only as an inference from (2), and one could only know (2) by observing fleas not words. So that while (1) may be said to *convert* to (1a), (2) cannot be said to convert to (2a). But that (1) converts to (1a) does not mean that (1) is reducible to a proposition about the use of words (270 f.).

It seems to me that what Lazerowitz sets out to prove is no doubt true: but that he uses "verbal sentence" in a somewhat confusing way. (1a) expresses *a rule of correct usage*, not an empirical general proposition about what word combinations actually occur. (It is of course an empirical proposition that this rule holds: but the rule itself is not a generalization.) (2a), on the other hand, does not express a rule of correct usage at all. Lazerowitz half acknowledges this in his remark that (2a) "is not about word-usage." Then what is it about? Is it simply a generalization about what combinations occur? If so (and if it were not false) one *could* learn it from observation of words not fleas. The truth is that (1a) and (2a) are not "verbal sentences" in the same sense: and now what happens to the argument that (1) and (1a) must be distinct because (2) and (2a) are distinct?

However, granted that (1a) is verbal and (1) is not, does this count as a *refutation* of Conventionalism? Yes, in the sense that it shows that the theory is based on innovation with words: i.e. in the sense that the theory is shown to be a philosophical one. The author could not be more in sympathy with its aim: its aim is to show the closeness of the connection between propositions of type (1) and their "verbal correlates." But this way of showing it is metaphysical. An author who, in effect, rejects a theory because it is philosophical is unlikely to agree with Wisdom that his own "meta-hypothesis" (p. 226) is itself philosophical in just this sense. Lazerowitz shows (it is true) that metaphysics is not nonsense and does not arise from mistakes about the correct use of language; that the contradictions which philosophers find in each others' views are not really there. Nevertheless he says that the philosopher is trying to make us "dupes to his verbal game," a game which he pursues for the sake of some unconscious illusion (pp. 224–5).

On p. xi (line 19), for "also" read "only"; on p. 155, line 22, for "take" read "taken"; on p. 212, etc., for "Blenheim Castle" read "Blenheim Palace"; on p. 220, 3rd line from foot," physical" is mis-spelt; on p. 273, 6th line from foot, for "in which respect is," read "in which respect it is."

KARL BRITTON.

Conceptual Thinking, a Logical Inquiry. By STEPHAN KÖRNER. (C.U.P. 1955. Pp. viii + 301. Price 30s.)

This is an ambitious book; it is also a difficult and demanding book, and especially so for the reviewer who wishes to do it justice. It is an ambitious book in that the philosophical territory that it covers is very wide; the author himself describes the topics treated in Part I as belonging traditionally "to logic in a wide sense, or to the philosophy of logic, in a narrow sense of the term 'logic,' " the topics considered in Part II "have been treated traditionally under the headings of epistemology and ontology," while "some of the topics in the last part furnish frequent matter of discussion for what have been traditionally known as aesthetics, ethics and philosophical method."

Nor does the author merely glance at this wide range of topics to illustrate some single theme; in Part III, for example, we get something like a general theory of aesthetics, set discussions of the nature of metaphysics and of analytic philosophy, and short discussions of many problems of ethics. This ambitious range of the discussion makes it quite impossible for the reviewer to attempt a summary or reasoned discussion of the whole book, for most of the author's own treatment is already summary in the extreme.

The other source of difficulty is the author's deliberate policy in choice of terminology. In his Preface he says: "I have found myself unable to adopt either of two highly attractive ways of expression. One of these is to use the exact language of some ready-made system of mathematical logic and ignore, on the whole, the incurable vagueness of ordinary empirical concepts. The other is to use the language of ordinary discourse and abjure all conscious use of technical terms. For my part I have had to follow, as I could, the practice of the majority of philosophers and employ both technical and non-technical language, defining new terms as and when it became necessary." Now this is in itself a hard saying; it is hard to see how the choice between the use of the symbolism of a system of mathematical logic and of the language of ordinary discourse could merely be the choice of a mode of expression for presenting some already chosen subject-matter. Mathematical logic avoids "the incurable vagueness of ordinary empirical concepts" not by containing more precise empirical concepts but by containing only logical concepts; either we need empirical concepts, in which case mathematical logic cannot provide us with our means of expression, or we do not, in which case the vagueness of ordinary empirical concepts is no bar to using ordinary language since we will not be using the empirical concepts contained therein.

However, the author in fact proceeds by early introducing, and making continual use of, a number of key "technical" concepts. At the outset "proposition," "statement," "concept" and "predicate" are introduced by explicit definitions, and much of the discussion is carried on in terms of "ostensive" and "non-ostensive" concepts and their "applicability" or "quasi-applicability" to some "basis." To the definition of all these terms the term "rule," treated as a non-technical term, makes an essential contribution. I wish to put no futile and presumptuous embargo on this procedure; but has the author accurately estimated the cost? That it must make his book more laborious reading he will no doubt have seen, and may well retort that in philosophy labour weighs nothing in the scales against clarity and precision. True enough; but is the precision gained by this procedure more than apparent; does not the replacement of our ordinary key-concepts by semi-technical ones perhaps lead rather to a suppression or concealment of genuine philosophical problems rather than to their solution? Certainly I suspect that Körner's use of some of the apparently precise terms listed above involves the suppression rather than the elimination of some of the thorny difficulties in the notion of linguistic rules, and this suspicion is heightened by the difficulty I experience in trying to make use of some of his general discussions by applying them to particular problems.

I also think that the use of technical terms by Körner sometimes leads him to produce only apparent answers to problems. I illustrate this point from his discussion of truth in Chapter XXIII. He maintains that Ramsey's view that truth is not a concept, since "p is true" means nothing different from "p," is false, and offers a definition of the concept. He says on page 200: "A very simple definition of truth is to regard it as synonymous with appropriateness. This definition would probably not correspond to any particular use of 'true', but it would exhibit what is common to all, or most, non-technical senses of

the term and to many technical ones." On page 198 we are told that to say that a proposition is appropriate is to say that "whoever were to apply the concept which is applied in stating the proposition, to the basis to which it is therein applied, would not violate the rules governing the concept." But this would have no effect on Ramsey's argument, for he would immediately retort that to say "whoever were to apply the concept which is applied in stating p, to the basis to which it is therein applied, would not violate the rules governing the concept" is to say nothing different from "p" and that there could be no point in using the longer formulation except for emphasis and stylistic reasons. Ramsey's view may be wrong, but it cannot be refuted in this way.

This book is obviously written by an author of high philosophical competence and energy, and on very many pages one finds something that both interests and stimulates: the short discussion of the application of mathematics in Chapter VII is, for example, most suggestive. Again, the chapter on "Validity and Logical Form" contains sense on a subject on which it is very hard not to talk nonsense; the few short pages in which Körner introduces the notion of metaphysical directives were most interesting to read. But in these, as in other, contexts the author shows us his ideas rather than putting them to work, and it would be uncandid of a reviewer not to admit that the result of the rapid series of brief discussions of so many topics in a language the technical precision of which he found more apparent than real was disappointing.

On page 84 it is stated that "assuming that *a* and *b* are the only people in this room, the proposition that all the people in this room are tall entails, and is entailed by, the proposition that *a* is tall and *b* is tall." Surely the question of what propositions entail cannot be affected by how many people there are in a room.

On pages 291–2 it is said: "Philosophers who practise philosophical analysis frequently do not attempt to explain its nature. Even those who are prepared to explain what they are doing do not as a rule explain with sufficient clarity why the concepts which are supposed to need analysis are considered defective and what the nature of the analysing relation is considered to be." I should have thought that the British analysts of the 'twenties and 'thirties who considered the analysandum defective, such as Wisdom, Stebbing and Black, were almost over-zealous and voluminous in their explanations of what they were doing; and later analysts, as Körner fails to note, do not explain why the analysandum is defective because they mostly accept the view of Wittgenstein that "every sentence in our language is in order as it is."

J. O. Urmson.

Moral Judgement. By D. Daiches Raphael. (Allen and Unwin. 1955. Pp. 224. Price 16s.)

In an earlier book (*The Moral Sense*, 1947) in the course of an exposition and criticism of certain eighteenth-century moral theories, Dr. Raphael developed and defended a rationalist ethical theory of the deontological and intuitionist kind propounded by Prichard, Ross and Carritt—a theory which made no concessions to naturalism or empiricism. Further reflection, the results of which are given in the present work, has led him to retain deontology but reject intuitionism and substitute for it a genetic and naturalistic account of moral concepts. The resulting theory which he puts forward tentatively as a hypothesis for discussion and about some of the details of which he has not finally made up his mind will, he thinks, overcome the objections usually urged against deontology and should be acceptable to the empiricists as well as the rationalists.

Dr. Raphael is well versed in the ethical literature of both the rationalist and the empirical schools and with the forms which the controversy between them took both in the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries. He states the position of each side clearly and concisely and fairly and brings out its strength and its weakness. The constructive theory in which he tries to overcome the weaknesses of each by elements from the other is less clear and convincing. Many sections of the argument taken by themselves are suggestive and illuminating, but the relation between the argument in different sections and the over-all picture are more difficult to follow.

In the first half of the book, which he calls the Logic of Ethics (a term which he uses in a sense somewhat different from the usual), he is concerned with "ethical concepts and the judgements in which they occur and the relations of implication between them" "with a view to making clear the degree of coherence between them and to discovering whether there is a single criterion of right actions." Here he takes as his data the intentional meanings of reflective moral judgments, i.e. what the ordinary moral agent consciously means to assert, "what is before the surface of his consciousness," when he makes a reflective judgment; and by a reflective judgment Raphael means one which the agent, when challenged, is prepared to stand by as stating what he sincerely believes to be right or wrong. In this inquiry common-sense moral judgments have to be taken at their face value. It is, Raphael contends, no part of the business of the Logic of Ethics to examine their truth or their relation to facts. And he argues that as long as we confine our attention to these data we must accept the position of the deontologists (1) that there are two and only two ethical concepts which are basic and irreducible in the sense that no other concepts or group of concepts, ethical or non-ethical, can be substituted for them without loss of meaning: obligation and good or fitting (good being a fitting object of a pro-attitude); and (2) that there are several independent moral principles or criteria of right actions implied in the moral judgments in which these concepts are used. He gives two alternative lists of these principles of obligation and fittingness or classes of right acts. With some minor and, I think, one major difference, these lists follow the same lines as those given by Ross and Carritt. The major difference is that Raphael lays much more emphasis on the principles of social morality, especially the principle of equality—equal liberty, equal opportunity, and equal satisfactions (at least up to a minimum standard) for all persons. Indeed the only moral principles which are discussed at any length are the principles of social justice; and of the two alternative lists of moral principles which are given one, and it the one which is mainly used in the sequel, reduces all principles of obligation to those of justice and friendship.

Is it not stretching the meaning of justice unduly to call the obligation to tell the truth or to relieve undeserved suffering or even to fulfil promises demands of justice? But more important: while I agree with Raphael that Ethics is concerned with social as well as individual morality, I think it is important to remember, as he does not always seem to do, that there are significant differences between the two. Individual morality is directly concerned with the relations between man and man, social morality with the relations between a community and its members. E.g. the obligation of providing equal opportunities or equal satisfactions for all persons, while it may and does involve duties on the part of the individual, is not his direct responsibility in the sense in which truth-telling and promise-keeping are. It is not a duty that he can perform by himself. He can play his part in performing it only in co-operation with others. Moreover there is much more agreement about the obligations of individual morality than about those of social morality.

Accordingly to lump all principles of obligation together and to argue as if what is true of some is necessarily true of all is apt to lead to confusion, confusion from which Raphael's later argument does not entirely escape. E.g. in discussing alternative moralities or moral systems, he seems to base his distinction between them on the extent to which they recognize the obligations of social morality, especially equality of treatment for all, but he assumes that all their moral principles and rules are different. In fact, many people who would not accept the principle of equality as he interprets it, among them Ross, would accept all the principles of individual morality and could not therefore properly be regarded as having a different morality from his own.

But though Raphael accepts the deontologist's position as far as the Logic of Ethics is concerned, he regards it as unsatisfactory in two respects. It leaves us with "an unconnected heap of moral principles," and it does not enable us to determine what we ought to do when the requirements of different principles of obligation conflict. It is partly to overcome these defects and partly to eliminate the necessity for intuitions of non-natural qualities of rightness and goodness that he advocates a naturalistic theory of moral concepts. This theory occupies the central part of what he calls the Metaphysics of Ethics which is concerned with the relation of ethical concepts to facts. According to this theory the facts to which moral concepts refer or which they denote or describe are all natural facts. But when these concepts are used in a specifically ethical sense a further element, an evocative or imperative element, enters into their meaning.

The natural fact referred to or described by "good" is interests; i.e. the enjoyments and the objects of the natural desires of affective-conative individuals. Whatever is called good, he tells us (117), is so-called "simply because it is, or serves, someone's interest." But this positive use of "good" is morally neutral, for people's interests may be morally good or bad. The normative or specifically ethical use of the word, in addition to its descriptive meaning of interest, "connotes a stimulus to action; it has an evocative or imperative force." No doubt even the positive use of "good" has some evocative force, but its ethical use has such force to a much higher degree. Disinterested desires are usually much weaker than interested desires. "Accordingly a reference to disinterested ends, if it is intended to provoke to action or a readiness to act, often needs a stimulus, and this is given by the evocative force of the words used, thereby causing them to be used normatively." Moreover, the normative use of such words does not refer to an individual action or a limited occasion only; it expresses "a general policy to be followed in all situations of a similar kind . . . it is a 'demand of reason,' i.e. a prescription of universal application" (121).

In the case of the ethical use of "ought" the imperative force is greater, the action "more forcefully demanded." For not all actions which are fitting are obligatory. "Our capacity to serve the interests of others is limited. . . . Therefore implicit conventions have arisen that only in certain types of situation is altruistic action strictly obligatory as opposed to fitting. . . . These conventions are usually due to the relative strength of most people's natural dispositions or to proved social utility, and often to a combination of both" (125).

Obligation differs from goodness or fittingness not only in the greater imperative force which it connotes but also in the natural facts which it denotes or to which it refers. This is brought out by an analysis of the state of mind from or in which it arises. The relation between the different elements, cognitive, conative and affective, which this analysis reveals is not entirely

clear—whether, e.g., some of them are related to others as causes to effects or as grounds to consequents or whether they are inseparable though distinguishable aspects of one state. A detailed analysis of one or two examples of an experience of obligation might have made the position clearer. Moreover the idea of obligation is sometimes said to be constituted by or to arise from the cognitive-affective aspect of the state of mind, at other times from its conative aspect. But the implication seems to be that before the idea can arise in the first instance all the aspects have to be present. Once the idea has arisen, however, it can be described in terms of any one of the three aspects though none of them by itself exhausts its meaning.

In order to be capable of having the idea of obligation a person must be able to enter imaginatively and sympathetically into the conations and affections of other people. When these capacities are activated in an act of sympathetic understanding that another person has interests or needs which the agent can help to satisfy, this act is said to constitute or give rise to an inter-personal bond or mental tie between the agent and the claimant. This bond or tie or the thought of it is said to be or constitute or express the obligation or to give rise to the idea of obligation. (The different expressions appear in different places in the text.)

What this bond requires of the agent, Raphael holds, is that he promote some of the interests of the person to whom he is thus related, which means that he feel towards his interests as he would towards his own, i.e. strive to realize them; and this striving or conation is said to be what the idea of obligation refers to (125). This seems to be a primarily conative account of obligation, but it is the account which makes it primarily cognitive which he mainly stresses and which is most consistent with his later contention that moral principles are forms of knowledge. And it is the act of sympathetic imagination and the thought of the bond which it constitutes which, he says, is the natural fact to which the idea of obligation refers.

The bond which we find in all obligations requires that we treat some of the ends of those to whom we are thus bound as if they were our own, and this Raphael interprets as meaning that we should treat themselves as ends in themselves or as subjects of ends. By this interpretation he arrives at the conclusion that all principles of obligation are determinate forms of the one ultimate principle of treating people as subjects of ends. This enables him to get over one of the defects which he found in the deontological position, that it leaves us with a multiplicity of independent moral principles. He gets over the other by reference to the act of sympathetic understanding involved in all obligations. "The affective-conative side of sympathetic imagination can be more or less strong, and therefore," he thinks, "it is natural that the concept (of moral obligation) arising from the experience of sympathetic imagination should include the idea of degree" (145). In cases of a conflict of obligations our duty is to follow the stronger obligation.

Raphael sees no reason why the empiricists should not accept this theory and treat moral principles as knowledge as they do mathematical propositions. He contends that moral principles are like mathematical in that both state necessary propositions. The rationalists regard mathematical propositions as synthetic *a priori* judgments, synthetic because they are psychologically synthetic and *a priori* because they express necessary propositions. The axioms they regard as self-evident intuitions and the propositions as strict knowledge. The empiricists regard the axioms as postulates and the propositions as analytic because they follow from the postulates and definitions of the system in which they occur. They also regard the propositions as knowledge though their relation to the facts which make them knowledge is complicated and indirect.

Why then should they not treat moral principles as knowledge in the same sense as mathematical propositions; for they follow logically from the principle of treating persons as ends; so that though psychologically synthetic they may be regarded as analytic in the extended sense given to the term by the empiricists?

What then about the ultimate principle of morality itself? It is not analytic either in the sense of being true by definition or of being an implicate of a more ultimate principle. Raphael suggests that it is a postulate, a general policy of action, which we adopt, i.e. elect to use, but to which there could be alternatives. Just as a mathematician may adopt Euclid's axioms and get one system of geometry or adopt alternative axioms and get alternative systems, so he thinks we may adopt the principle of treating all people as ends in themselves and get our system of morality or adopt other principles and get alternative systems of morality each with its own subordinate principles and rules. Examples of such alternative moralities based on the principles of treating only one man (egoism) or only some men or only the community as a whole as ends in themselves are, he thinks, to be found both in theory and in practice. After considering various possible ways of trying to prove that one of these systems is better than the others, he comes to the conclusion that our own system comes rather better out of the discussion but that none of the proofs is entirely satisfactory. In the end he is unable to make up his mind whether, with the empiricists, to regard his ultimate principle as a postulate which we elect to use or, with the rationalists, to regard it as a self-evident intuition.

For reasons stated earlier Raphael's alternative moralities don't seem to me comparable with alternative mathematical systems. Nor do I think the suggestion of treating the ultimate principle of morality as a postulate consistent with his attempted derivation of the idea of obligation from acts of sympathetic imagination. And while I should be prepared to accept his ultimate principle, I am not satisfied that he has proved or indeed that it is in fact the case that the different principles of obligation follow deductively from it. But whatever doubts one may have about some of the conclusions at which it arrives, this book has the great merit of stating in a clear and challenging way many of the most complicated and controversial issues of contemporary Ethics and of discussing them with ingenuity and penetration and without dogmatism.

A. MACBEATH.

The Value Judgement. By W. D. LAMONT. (Edinburgh University Press. 1955. Pp. xvi + 335. Price 25s.)

This is an important book, challenging and thought-provoking. Students of the social sciences, especially ethics and economics, should find it illuminating and stimulating, and whether or not they accept its main conclusions they cannot afford to neglect the challenge which it presents with such vigour and vitality. It formulates ethical problems in a way which cuts across the differences which have divided recent ethical theorists. It challenges assumptions which are accepted without question by most moral philosophers. It distinguishes sharply between issues which are usually considered together and, as Dr. Lamont thinks, often confused; and it brings into fruitful relation branches of inquiry which are usually considered in isolation and uses them to throw light on one another. The argument is presented with great clarity and sustained with systematic thoroughness. It is illustrated with apt and

homely examples and, even when the going is exacting, it is enlivened with flashes of wit.

It is impossible in a short review to do justice to Dr. Lamont's contentions, especially as many of his views are rather out of sympathy with most recent writing on the subject. All I can hope to do is to indicate the main line he follows and some of the conclusions at which he arrives.

Lamont distinguishes sharply between the moral judgment (e.g. that an action ought to be done) and the value judgment (e.g. that a state of affairs is good) on the ground that the concepts used and the principles and criteria implied in them are radically different. Failure to pay sufficient attention to this distinction he considers one of the greatest sources of confusion in moral philosophy. Terms such as "ethical sentences" which are used to cover both moral and value judgments and "moral goodness," which describes virtue or conscientious action as if it were a valuational concept, seem to him products of loose thinking and sources of confusion in ethical theory. He admits that there are norms or imperatives which are independent of our personal likes and dislikes, but he contends that they belong to the sphere of the moral not the value judgment, and that the belief that moral imperatives will vanish unless they are connected with goodness is entirely mistaken.

The concepts used in moral judgment—duty and obligation, right, justice and imperatives and the principles in which they occur—norms and rules which follow from respect for personality—are common to ethics and jurisprudence. Valuational concepts—good and bad, better and worse—are common to ethics and economics. Up to the end of the eighteenth century at least, Lamont points out, economics and jurisprudence were parts of moral philosophy. Since they became independent branches of inquiry they have devoted a great deal of study to these concepts and criteria which are common to them and ethics, and students of ethics would do well to pay more attention to the results of their systematic inquiries.

Moral judgments are concerned with the inter-personal order, value judgments with the correlation of ends within the individual's total personal conception of good. The moral and legal rules and principles which govern the inter-personal order—rules which give the individual rights and liberties and impose duties on him—provide a framework within which he is free to pursue his personal ends according to his personal conception of good. It is in this pursuit that he uses the concepts and criteria of value. In trying to understand this activity and the value judgments passed in the course of it, moral concepts and principles and criteria are out of place, as much out of place as are those used in aesthetic or efficiency judgments which have also sometimes been confused with value judgments. The fact that an action is virtuous or a work of art beautiful or an instrument efficient may be a reason for regading it as good, but its virtue or beauty or efficiency should not be confused with its goodness. The concepts and criteria used in deciding whether the action is virtuous, the work of art beautiful or the instrument efficient are different from one another and all of them are different from those used in deciding whether the action, the work of art or the instrument is good. Now it is with the value judgment that Lamont is concerned in this book, but in a final chapter he briefly explains the view he takes of the other main problems of ethics, i.e. the moral judgment and the problem of freedom, in order to put the value judgment in its proper perspective in a complete ethical theory as he conceives it.

In dealing with value recent ethical writers have been mainly concerned with the question whether it is a characteristic of the objective order or an expression of a feeling or emotion or other mental state on the part of the

subject, and the result has been a stalemate in which no progress seems possible, a condition in which the one side accuses the other of moral blindness and the other retorts with a charge of mystery-mongering with non-natural qualities. Accordingly Lamont poses the question about value in a new way which by-passes the subjective-objective controversy, viz., what is the nature of the mental activity involved in attributing value to anything? This question he subdivides into two, one concerned with the simple or positive value judgment—the simple attriubtion of value, e.g. "this is good," the other with the comparative value judgment, the attribution of degree of goodness e.g. "this is better than that."

Throughout his treatment Lamont proceeds on the assumption, which he states explicitly, that we all as a matter of fact strive to realize the "good" as we conceive it, and that when we are forced to choose between two "goods" we choose the better. Choice he regards as the external expression of the internal act of valuation; and the only evidence we have that we value X more than Y is that we in fact choose it in preference to Y. "Choice is neither more nor less than the expression of valuation and valuation is the comparative value judgment" (194).

Though the positive value judgment is more fundamental, in the sense that we must attribute goodness to a thing if we are to attribute degree of goodness to it, yet the comparative value judgment is practically more important; for in the conditions in which human life is normally, if not invariably, lived, people cannot have all the things which they regard as good. They are therefore forced to make a comparative valuation, to arrange the things in an order of value, to make a choice, and it is this comparative valuation or choice which determines most of the things which they strive to realize as good. Accordingly Lamont devotes the first and much the larger part of the book to the comparative value judgment.

Now it is this process of comparative valuation, this "allocating of scarce resources between alternative demands," which forms the subject-matter of economics. The economist's problem is, no doubt, different from Lamont's. The economist is concerned with valuation as it effects inter-personal exchange in the operations of the market, but in trying to understand these operations he has devoted a great deal of systematic study to what takes place in the individual's mind before he takes part in an exchange; and it is the process of valuation in the individual's mind which is Lamont's subject. Moreover Lamont contends that in their account of this process the economists are not dealing with a particular kind of value but with the general principles of valuation as they operate in a particular sphere, i.e. the sphere of economic phenomena, and that therefore the concepts and principles and criteria which their analysis reveals are those of all valuation in whatever sphere it takes place. Accordingly, the greater part of Lamont's account of the comparative value judgment consists of a critique of economic methodology in which he analyses and clarifies the nature and interrelation of economic concepts and brings out the principles and postulates and criteria which are presupposed in the value judgments in which these concepts occur.

According to the theory which emerges in the course of this analysis, every valuation involves a reference to a common or comprehensive demand of which the competing alternatives between which we have to choose are qualitively different expressions, and the contribution of each alternative to the satisfaction of the common demand is capable of being quantitatively measured. The comparative value of each of the alternatives is measured by reference to its estimated opportunity costs, i.e. by reference to the other goods which we have to forgo to realize it. These principles apply to all valuations

or choices from the simplest, such as the choice of an article of food, to the most comprehensive, such as the choice of a career or a way of life. By this process of comparative valuation we arrive at an integrated conception of personal good, a conception of what we regard as good on the whole. The operative principle which guides the process is the principle of economy, the principle according to which we strive to maximize the satisfaction of our various demands for the things which we regard as good. This principle is the ultimate ground of comparative valuation.

In his account of the positive value judgment, the judgment in which we attribute goodness *simpliciter*, Lamont contends that to say something is good is, by general consent, to express approval of it, and that approval is a conative rather than a cognitive or affective attitude, or rather that it is a total state of mind which has a cognitive, a conative and an affective aspect but in which the main emphasis is on the conative aspect. It is a conative disposition rather than an overt conative activity. When conditions arise which stimulate it into activity it may express itself either in overt action to create or maintain the state of affairs of which we approve or in the verbal form "Such and such is good." The cognitive aspect of approval as a total mental state is the awareness of the natural characteristics of the situation to which approval is the response. Because it has this cognitive aspect the value of judgment is a genuine judgment, and there is a sense in which the criterion of truth and falsity applies to it. In certain value judgments this cognitive aspect is very prominent and it is by attending to judgments in which this is the case that some writers have come to regard the value judgment as primarily cognitive. Similarly approval has an affective or emotive aspect and by concentrating on examples in which this aspect is prominent other writers have come to regard the value judgment as an expression of feeling or emotion—though emotion is as much conative as affective. The reasons which we give for our approvals presuppose further conative dispositions in addition to those which find expression in the approvals concerned. Consequently when we come to value judgments expressing ultimate conative dispositions or the approval of ultimate ends we are unable to give reasons for them. Therefore some writers regard them as apprehensions of intrinsic goodness. In fact, argues Lamont, they are the responses of our nature to certain objective situations. Thus the ultimate ground of approval or the positive value judgment is certain conative dispositions or activity patterns inherent in our nature.

I realize that this brief summary does little justice to Lamont's masterly analysis and closely-knit argument. Not that I find his argument entirely convincing. There are some points of detail, others of principle, on which I find myself unable to agree with him. E.g. his distinction between the moral and the value judgment, however important, seems to me too sharply drawn. I do not think choice is our only evidence of valuation, and neither choice nor valuation seems to me to be confined to the "economic" judgment. We have experiences which are neither chosen nor striven for and to which the principle of economy does not apply; if they come at all they come as gifts of nature or of grace, and yet we value them very highly. But despite these differences of opinion I have found this book very stimulating and read it with profit and admiration.

A. MACBEATH.

An Essay in Christian Philosophy. By DOM ILLTYD TRETHOWEN. (Longmans. 1954. Pp. 186. Price 12s. 6d.)

The Iron Curtain of the political world has its counterpart in the realm of philosophy. It is true that the war between the philosophical parties is a

shooting war, in that they fire off salvoes at each other; but the general effect seems to be much the same as that achieved in the diplomatic sphere by an exchange of notes. After each sortie each side returns to its prepared positions. It all seems rather a waste of time. Yet the war must go on, since neither side may allow its position to go by default. And perhaps it will turn out to be a war of attrition, and in the very long run something will have been achieved.

Granted all this, Dom Illtyd's contribution to the debate is a not unimportant one. The impact of the work is somewhat reduced by the fact that he is fighting on two fronts. Whilst he regards the "contemporary philosopher" as the main adversary, since the latter would deny all substance to the very foundations of the Christian system, Dom Illtyd delivers some shrewd blows by the way at those Christian allies who seek to defend orthodoxy by what he regards as invalid arguments. He himself would hold that the basis of the Christian metaphysic is a refined form of Ontologism (though he might well reject that label), since our knowledge of God "is a matter of experience, but not of sense-experience."

But it is unfair to attempt to reduce to a few lines an analysis which occupies the whole of a chapter. Nor is it, in fact, always easy to follow the argument at this point, central though it is to the whole book. Nevertheless Dom Illtyd has something important to say, and his book which is eminently readable and shows a fair acquaintance with much contemporary writing deserves attention not only from the other side but also from Dom Illtyd's own colleagues.

THOMAS CORBISHLEY, S.J.

Existentialist Thought. By RONALD GRIMSLEY. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press. 1955. Pp. 223. Price 15s.)

In writing this book Dr. Grimsley had in mind two sets of potential readers; those who have not read the works of the existentialist philosophers and who wish to find a reasonably full and systematic exposition of their main ideas, and those who are engaged in consulting the works but who would like at the same time to be furnished with some sort of guide. His aim, therefore, is to give "a straightforward exposition of some leading existentialist philosophers" rather than to provide a critical discussion and evaluation of the existentialist movement. After a short general introduction he outlines in successive chapters the philosophies of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers and Marcel. He then draws attention in a brief postscript to certain implications of existentialist thought.

So far as I am competent to judge, I think that Dr. Grimsley has succeeded in giving a fair, balanced and sound exposition of the main ideas of the philosophers with whom he deals. I doubt whether in his exposition of Sartre he has given sufficient prominence to the latter's atheism. True, the author follows closely the lines of Sartre's main ontological work; but I think that in Sartre's philosophy as a whole the atheist position possesses great importance. With regard to Heidegger, the author seems to be in some doubt about the precise meaning to be attached to the word Nothing. But I do not think that the fault lies with Dr. Grimsley. The book is not an exciting one. The author mentions, of course, the attitudes and "moods" with which existentialism is associated; but it can hardly be said that he conveys them, in the sense of giving them vivid and imaginative expression. However, the book's dryness has the advantage of directing the reader's attention primarily to the conceptual structures of the various philosophies and of showing him that the

existentialists are certainly not irrationalists in the sense that they do not use their reasons.

In a footnote to the chapter on Heidegger Dr. Grimsley mentions "critics like Carnap and the Logical Positivists" who have accused Heidegger of supposing that because we can use the word Nothing as a grammatical noun there must be something corresponding to it, so that Nothing becomes a peculiar kind of Something. Now, it is, of course, quite true that some Logical Positivists have drawn attention to the peculiar use of the word Nothing by Heidegger and Sartre. But though positivists may have been prominent in putting forward objections of this kind, the objections do not necessarily presuppose positivism. I have not got to be a positivist in order to find Heidegger's use of the word Nothing very queer. Nor have I got to be a positivist in order to find the question, What is the meaning of Being? a rather perplexing and obscure question. Nor to feel that Sartre's use of the term "freedom" tends to evacuate all definite meaning. We are now fairly well provided with general outlines of existentialism in English. We have the works of Mr. Blackham, Dr. Heinemann, Dr. Allen and now of Dr. Grimsley. Perhaps what we can look forward to is a monograph on a thinker such as Heidegger by a philosopher who does not rule out all metaphysical philosophy from the start but who is really concerned about language and who is prepared to examine in as thorough a manner as possible the significance of the questions raised. I do not assert that Heidegger does not raise significant questions. But I think that the matter needs a thorough, though sympathetic, examination. And I see little hope of any such examination being seriously carried out by a continental philosopher. If I prove to be mistaken, this will be a pleasant surprise.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON, S.J.

Six Books of the Commonwealth. By J. BODIN. Abridged and translated with an introduction by M. J. TOOLEY. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1955. Pp. xliii + 212. Price 15s.).

As the editor says, the full text of the *Six Books* makes laborious reading and it is therefore a great advantage to have this judicious selection and abridgment in readable English.

Bodin's great distinction is that he was one of the first, perhaps the first, in a modern, or at any rate a transitional, setting, to ask: "what is a state and how is it constituted?"

In the course of his inquiry he investigates the final ends of the well-ordered commonwealth; the family; citizenship; sovereignty; the different kinds of commonwealth; the rise and fall of commonwealths; and so on.

He is fully aware of what may be called the new secular situation. and thus his central topic is *la république* and its sovereignty. According to Bodin, commonwealth is the rightly ordained government of a number of families, and of those things which are their common concern, by a sovereign power.

As the editor points out in her valuable introduction, Bodin is greatly indebted to Aristotle's *Politics* both for the form and for the content of the work—especially when he is concerned with the end, or ends, of government. He is less dependent on Aristotle when discussing the practical means to these ends. But he agrees with Aristotle that the family is "a natural society" and in a way basic. The aspect of the family which he stressed was the authority of the father as the wielder of discipline; for he held typically medieval

ideas about the sinfulness of human nature and its need for a strong correcting hand.

Hence it is natural to find him saying that the distinguishing mark of the state is sovereign power. Such power has to be absolute and perpetual. This is not seriously qualified by his recognition of the laws governing the succession to the French monarchy, for he holds that they do not restrict the sovereignty, but only the choice of the person exercising it. Bodin was opposed to the belief in the popular origin of sovereignty, probably because it was already being used to support the right of rebellion. He holds that ultimately all power is "of God" and consent is irrelevant.

Thus Bodin departs from the traditional view that the king is the embodiment of justice. True, he derives all jurisdiction from the king and thinks, like Hobbes, that law is the command of the sovereign. The sovereign can, however, delegate his functions, in this respect. This is not so of all attributes of sovereignty, some of which the sovereign cannot delegate, e.g. (1) the right of making peace and concluding alliances; (2) the authorizing of appointments to public offices; (3) the acting as a final court of appeal; (4) the demanding of unqualified oaths of submission. Bodin thus concludes that there is no right of rebellion or of disobedience to the law. His appeal here is to divine institution. Men are obliged by both natural and divine law to obey the ruler set over them by God. As the editor points out, Bodin, with his insistence on *power* stands in an interesting relation both to Hobbes and Machiavelli. He would not have agreed with Hobbes that there is no distinction of right and wrong until a sovereign makes laws creating this distinction. In spite of his insistence on power, Bodin believes in an absolute moral order. "The sovereign is not a law unto himself, but the instrument of divine law." Introd. p. xxvii.

This translation should be valuable to students of political theory who have been deterred by the difficulties of the original, and its repetitiousness. But even the relative simplicity of these selections demands careful study, since Bodin was so obviously a transitional thinker combining with traditional notions many "modern" observations which are perhaps not always compatible with the traditions he inherited.

There is a useful bibliographical note.

D. J. McCracken.

The Ground and Nature of the Right. By C. I. Lewis. (Columbia University Press, Oxford University Press. 1955. Pp. 97. Price 20s.)

Professor Lewis's book will probably be read with most interest for what it has to say about ethics, but the term "right" is used by him in a wider sense to cover also intellectually right thinking. The chapter concerned with this, *Believing and Concluding*, after a number of unexceptionable statements concludes with the following more startling remark which seems to be an attempt to assimilate induction to deduction: "No rule of induction ever warrants unqualifiedly a conclusion of the form 'Q.' 'Q' is rationally credible in degree m/n; what it warrants is no more than that if the total pertinent evidence be 'P,' then 'Q' is credible in degree m/n. And if the rule applied is valid and really sufficient to the case, that *hypothetical* statement—strange as it may seem—is true *a priori*" (p. 37). This paradox is something with which I should be inclined to agree, but I should have been very glad if the author had had room to say more on this topic.

The last remark also applies to his discussions of ethics, especially where he considers the relation between utility and justice. Our author has consider-

able affinities with Sidgwick and tries like him to combine a predominantly utilitarian ethics with certain rational principles apparently taken as self-evident, but his leaning to hedonism is more qualified—for instance, he admits a principle of organic unities like Moore's (p. 68), and he thinks that the very possibility of asking the question whether something which is expedient is yet wrong because it is unjust overthrows strict utilitarianism (pp. 72–3). His main principle at first looks almost tautologous, as just being the law to conform to objective actualities (p. 89), but presently it expands into the Law of Compassion, which requires us to consider the happiness of others, and the Law of Moral Equality, which covers Kant's two great principles (pp. 91–3). It seems to me unfortunate here that he does not recognize the concept of prima facie duties. Consequently he has to maintain that no action can be right if it contravenes *any* rule of right-doing (p. 94). He avoids indeed the paradox of maintaining, e.g. that we ought never to lie, even to save a life, but he does so at the expense of leaving his general rules very vague. I realize that considerable inadequacies were inevitable in so short a book, but if he had to be limited to such a small compass I venture to suggest that the author might have done better to devote the whole work to ethics instead of only three of the five chapters. That would have given him a chance to make at least the main outlines of his position really clear.

A. C. Ewing.

An Essay on Christian Philosophy. By Jaques Maritain. Tr. by E. H. Flannery. (New York: Philosophical Library. Pp. xi + 116. Price $2.75.)

The Christian Experience. By Jean Mouroux. Tr. by G. R. Lamb. (London: Sheed and Ward. 1955. Pp. xi + 370. Price 16s.)

Martin Buber: The life of Dialogue. By Maurice S. Friedman. (London: Routledge Kegan and Paul. 1955. Pp. x + 310. Price 25s.)

An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief. By R. B. Braithwaite. (Cambridge Univ. Press. 1955. Pp. 35. Price 3s. 6d.)

Whatever Maritain writes commands respect. As perhaps the most distinguished of Thomist philosophers living, one expects that the conclusions he reaches will harmonize with those of Aquinas. The last words of the book put the issue briefly "Although the 'philosophy of religion' *par excellence* is theology, there is none the less room for a philosophic discipline in the shape of an authentic philosophy of religion. If it is to become a true science, however, it must be integrated with moral philosophy adequately considered, and hence be subalternated to theology." One may think that this is exactly the opposite of what should be, and prefer Macmurray's suggestion that philosophy is theology, theology in its widest sense, as the Greeks regarded it, but, not withstanding, one must respect Maritain's careful analysis of the position. Even so, it is hard to see how, apart from the dead, but still powerful hand of Aquinas, anyone could want in these days to regard a true science as integrated with moral philosophy and subordinated to theology.

Abbé Mouroux's book is duly licensed with the approval of his ecclesiatical authorities. It is a careful and learned study of religious experience, not from the psychological, but rather the theological point of view, and regards religious experience as synonymous with Christian experience, a position which seems to do less than justice to the width and variety of religion amongst mankind. With these limitations, however, the book has its value in the restricted sphere in which it moves.

Buber has his own following and those who want to know what he teaches will find Professor Friedman's book of the utmost value. Since the death of

Freud and Bergson, Buber is the most distinguished and best known of Jewish writers and is, of course, much more closely connected with Judaism than the other two famous Jews who were Jews only by birth. Moreover, Buber, especially in his I and Thou philosophy, has influenced many Christian thinkers. Professor Friedman's approach is expository rather then critical and lit by appreciative enthusiasm. Fully annotated and with an excellent bibliography, it gives what is necessary for those who need an introduction to Buber and a commentary for those who are already acquainted with his writings.

Professor Braithwaite's A. S. Eddington Memorial Lecture is upon a topic which would certainly have interested Eddington. "The kernel for an empiricist of the problem of religious belief," says Professor Braithwaite, "is to explain, in empirical terms, how a religious statement is used by a man who asserts it in order to express his religious convictions." He holds that a religious assertion is used as a moral assertion, and a moral assertion is a resolution to act according to what it asserts. It is a declaration of a policy of action. This is not to say that a religious and a moral assertion are identical. Professor Braithwaite indicates several points of difference, but in respect of what is said above, they are at one. One thinks Professor Braithwaite tends to back date Christian thought some fifty years, which is as unwise as it would be to assume that scientific opinion remains what it was before Planck and Einstein. But with his conclusion that Christianity is in essence the demand for a personal commitment to a personal way of life, one may express entire agreement.

E. S. WATERHOUSE.

Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism. By GERSHOM G. SHOLEM. (London: Thames and Hudson. 1955. Pp. xv. 456. Price 35s.)

Obviously this is not a book which offers a popular appeal, but the writer occupies the chair of Hebrew Mysticism in the University of Jerusalem and this points alike to the importance attached to the subject and the competence of the author. The basis of the book is nine lectures originally given in New York in 1938, but all are enlarged, save the last one. A second edition was published in 1946 and this is a reprint, with certain corrections and also additions to the very comprehensive bibliography. As the book is already well known to students in this subject, it is needless to describe it, and the success it has already attained is sufficient indication of its merits. All that needs to be said is that anyone who wishes to explore the subject, or even to refer to it, cannot find any better book for the purpose than this. It has been said that Judaism is the least mystical of the great religions. That may be true of its official and Biblical expressions, but as in another of the "practical" religions, Islam, the mystical element broke out from the theology and the law and found its own expressions. The last mystical movement in Israel was in the nineteenth century amongst those known as the Hasidim. Now Jewish mysticism is quiescent, but Professor Scholem says "the secret life can break out to-morrow in you or me." That is true. Mysticism is one of the immortal features of humanity.

E. S. WATERHOUSE.

Founding the Life Divine: The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. By MORWENNA DONNELLY. (Rider. Pp. 176. Price 12s. 6d.)

Those who look to a general advance of culture, and the easement of political problems, from the confluence of the cultures of the East and the West will

find Sri Aurobindo a figure of outstanding importance even if they have much hesitation about sharing the estimate of him advanced in the preface to this book as possibly "the greatest figure of our times." Other Eastern scholars who have had their education in the West have sought to bring the cultures of the East and the West to a fruitful union, in many cases overlooking deep-seated differences and blurring essential features of the views combined. Aurobindo is less open to the latter accusation than most, and his work has the interest of setting before us an ideal of unity to be created rather than the artificial forcing of opposing conceptions into the mould of a general theory. Students of religion today will find particular interest in the notion of our union with a Supreme Reality (transcending the separateness of mental life) taking the form of the transformation of the here and now. Integral Yoga "aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven and Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence." This is the basis of a more dynamic form of Hinduism than is usually presented to Western readers and which is itself in part no doubt due to the impact of the West on the East. Hints of this have come from other quarters also, but rarely has it so much relevance to the problems of immanence and transcendence in the form they are assuming today than in the work of Aurobindo whose insight into other more specific problems is also considerable and entitles him to closer attention than he has yet received outside his own country, where he is clearly a very considerable influence. This makes the lucid and readable outline of Aurobindo's main work presented by Miss Donnelly, and commended in a vigorous and discerning foreword by A. Basu, exceptionally welcome. Readers will find many difficulties in some of Aurobindo's views, but it would not be profitable to dwell upon them here, as the book makes no serious attempt at a critical appraisal of Aurobindo's views. Its aim is to introduce him, and this it succeeds in doing in a skilful and informative way. At no point does Miss Donnelly attempt to go deeply into the sorts of question which her subject is likely to present to philosophers, and her book could not in any other way be regarded as a notable work. But it is a very successful book within its modest limits and should not be overlooked by students of religion.

H. D. Lewis.

Sovereign Reason and other studies in the philosophy of science. By Ernest Nagel. (The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1954. Pp. 315. Price $5.)

This book consists of sixteen essays, written for different occasions, all previously published and reprinted with only minor editorial changes. All except the last are "critical studies of contemporary philosophers who have been occupied, in one way or another, with the content or method of modern science, and who have thereby sought to illumine the nature and operations of human reason."

In reading these essays it is at once clear that Professor Nagel, despite the full title of his book, has not restricted himself to philosophy of science but has gone well beyond this into realms of general epistemology. But this, no doubt, is because, in his view, "the boundaries of the philosophy of science are in fact the boundaries of philosophy itself." (p. 298). Whether or not this point will be generally taken, Professor Nagel has undoubtedly compiled one of the most useful and illuminating books to appear in recent years. Throughout his critical appraisals he exhibits supreme analytical competence; and he is moreover urbane, assured without being pompous and a stylist of a calibre that makes his book a delight to read. The contents are briefly as follows.

After dealing some body-blows, in Essay 1, at what he calls "Malicious Philosophies of Science"—represented primarily by writers such as Maritain, Gilson and other neo-Thomists—he passes on, in Essay 2, to consider, somewhat briefly, some less ecclesiastical philosophies of science of which the works of Whitehead and Eddington provide typical examples. Essay 3, entitled "Philosophy and the American Temper," deals, as its name implies, with the modern American scene and comes down approvingly on the side of "contextualistic naturalism." Two brilliant essays on C. S. Peirce come next, originally published in parts over seven years (1933–1940), and after that three essays on Dewey. A further essay on Whitehead is followed by three on Bertrand Russell of which the first, Essay 10, gives one of the clearest and most penetrating criticisms of Russell's middle-period epistemology that I have read. Essay 13 is wholly devoted to Eddington's philosophy of science, with all its unfortunate misuse of terms, and Professor Nagel here completes the task so ably undertaken by Miss Stebbing in her *Philosophy and the Physicists*, a book which, as we are reminded, Eddington dismissed with a quip. Essay 14, originally published in 1939, is a most acute appraisal of Reichenbach's application of his theory of probability to the theory of knowledge and particularly to the problem of the external world; and Essay 15, entitled "Sovereign Reason"—from which the collection derives its title—is a sustained but courteous attack on Professor Blanshard's attempt to justify the doctrine of internal relations. The last essay is entitled "The Perspectives of Science" and though not dealing specifically with any one philosopher, is as elegant and illuminating as the rest.

It is difficult to single out any one essay for special commendation since all are so good. But I think that those who are not primarily interested in the philosophy of science will find Essays 10 to 12 on Russell, Essay 14 on Reichenbach and Essay 16 on Blanshard to be models of epistemological criticism.

J. Hartland-Swann.

Books also received:

Raynor C. Johnson. *Nurslings of Immortality*. Hodder & Stoughton. 1957. Pp. 279. 25s.

R. V. Sampson. *Progress in the Age of Reason*. Heinemann. 1957. Pp. 259. 21s.

Theodosius Dobzhansly. *The Biological Basis of Human Freedom*. Columbia University Press. London: Oxford University Press. 1957. Pp. 135. 18s. 6d.

Rex and Margaret Knight. *A Modern Introduction to Psychology*. Fifth Edition. University Tutorial Press Ltd. Pp. 263. 9s. Apart from a number of minor alterations the difference between this and the fourth edition is that a chapter has been added on Personality, with sections on the various contemporary theories on types of personality and on the approach to the study of personality through factor analysis. There is also some discussion of methods by which personality is assessed.

ALVIN BOYD KUHN. *The Lost Light.* An Interpretation of Ancient Scriptures. The Academy Press, Elizabeth, New Jersey. 1940. Pp. 616. Extensive Bibliography and Index. Second Edition 1948. $3.00.

ALVIN BOYD KUHN. *Theosophy: A Modern Revival of Ancient Wisdom.* The Academy Press, New Jersey. Second Edition 1944. Pp. 351. Index, Bibliography. $3.00.

ALVIN BOYD KUHN. *Shadow of the Third Century: A Revaluation of Christianity.* The Academy Press, New Jersey. 1949. Pp. 541. Index. $3.50.

DAVID BOHM. *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics.* Foreword by Louis de Broglie. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957. Pp. (xi) & 170. 21s.

STEPHEN E. TOULMIN, RONALD W. HEPBURN AND ALASDAIR MACINTYRE. *Metaphysical Beliefs.* S.C.M. Press Ltd. 1957. Pp. 216. 25s.

MICHAEL B. FOSTER. *Mystery and Philosophy.* S.C.M. Press. 1957. Pp. 96. 12s. 6d.

GEOFFREY L. RUDD. *Human Nature As It Is.* H. H. Greaves Ltd. Pp. 22. 1s.

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY. *The Transformation of Nature in Art.* Dover Publications, New York. 1956. (Unaltered republication of second edition.) Pp. 245. $1.75.

FRANZ CUMONT. *The Mysteries of Mithra.* Dover Publications, New York. 1956 (unaltered republication of the second revised edition). Pp. (xiv) & 239. $1.85.

FRANZ CUMONT. *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism.* Dover Publications, New York. 1956 (unaltered republication of the first English translation published in 1911). Pp. (xxiv) & 298. $1.75.

DAVID HUME. *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (ed. and with an Introduction by Charles W. Hendel). Liberal Arts Press, New York. 1957. Pp. (lxiii) & 158. 75 cents.

GEORGE BERKELEY. *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (ed. and with an Introduction by Colin M. Turbay). The Liberal Arts Press, New York. 1957. Pp. (xxiv) & 104. 75 cents.

M. M. BHATTACHERJE. *Pictorial Poetry.* The Research Bulletin (Arts) of the University of the Punjab. 1954. Pp. 182. Rs.10.

Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1955. United States Government Printing Office, Washington. 1956. Pp. (ix) & 537. $4.

ARTHUR E. MORGAN. *Search for Purpose.* Watts. 1957. Pp. (vii) & 197. 15s.

RUTH BORCHARD. *John Stuart Mill, the Man.* Watts. 1957. Pp. 156. 18s.

C. A. MACE (Ed.). *British Philosophy in the Mid-Century.* A Cambridge Symposium. George Allen & Unwin. 1957. Pp. 396. 30s.

MARSILIUS OF PADUA. (Trans. and Introduction by Alan Gewirth.) Vol. II: *Defensor Pacis.* Columbia University Press. London: Oxford University Press. 1956. 68s.

LEONARD NELSON. *System of Ethics.* (Trans. by Norbert Guterman, Foreword by H. J. Paton, Introduction by Julius Kraft.) Yale University Press. London: Oxford University Press. 1957. Pp. (xxiii) & 285. 40s.

ERNEST NAGEL. *Logic without Metaphysics.* The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill. 1957. Pp. (xviii) & 433. $6.00.

J. CROPSEY. *Polity and Economy.* Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague. 1957. Pp. (xii) & 101. No price given.

DANTE ALIGHIERI. *On World Government.* (Trans. Herbert W. Schneider.) The Liberal Arts Press, New York. 1957. Pp. (xvi) & 80. 60 cents.

PAUL LEVY. *Buddhism a "Mystery Religion"?* Athlone Press. 1957. Pp. 111. 18s.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE. (Trans. Hazel E. Barnes.) *Being and Nothingness.* Methuen. 1957. Pp. (lxvii) & 636. 50s.

BERNARD J. F. LONERGAN. *Insight.* Longmans, Green & Co. 1957. Pp. (xxx) & 785. 63s.

HAROLD H. JOACHIM. *Descartes's Rules for the Direction of the Mind.* George Allen & Unwin. 1957. Pp. 124. 10s. 6d.

PETER GEACH. *Mental Acts.* Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957. Pp. (x) & 136. 12s. 6d.

D. W. HAMLYN. *The Psychology of Perception.* Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957. Pp. (vii) & 120. 12s. 6d.

W. Y. EVANS-WENTZ. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead.* Third Edition. Oxford University Press. 1957. Pp. (lxxxiv) & 249. 25s.

BARUCH SPINOZA. *The Road to Inner Freedom.* Philosophical Library, New York. 1957. Pp. 215. $3.00.

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INSTITUTE NOTES

OBJECTS OF THE INSTITUTE

The Royal Institute of Philosophy was founded in order to promote the study of philosophy within the Universities and other educational institutions and also among the educated public generally. It pursues its aim by

(1) Organizing courses of lectures;
(2) Providing those of its members who wish for it with advice on philosophical reading;
(3) Publishing a quarterly journal, PHILOSOPHY, in which philosophical problems are discussed and new books reviewed.

Philosophy is a group of studies rather than a single one, and it has been pursued by different methods at different times. The Royal Institute of Philosophy interprets the term in a wide sense, so as to include ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, the philosophy of religion, logic and the philosophy of science, the philosophy of history, political and social philosophy, and the philosophy of mind, and is not committed to any single school or method. The specialization which has taken place between the sciences and within them has made it desirable for scientists and philosophers to consider, from time to time, the relationships of the sciences to one another and to other aspects of human endeavour. Developments in psychology, psychiatry and social anthropology raise not only scientific and logical problems but also appear relevant to the ways in which men think about religion, morality and law, so that there is a constant need for unprejudiced and detailed inquiry into the precise points at which these developments are relevant and into the consequences which ought to be drawn. It is constantly desirable, too, that there be a renewal of our thinking on the questions of freedom and equality, authority and criticism, tradition and progress, which form the subject-matter of political philosophy. Persisting throughout all social changes is the deep-rooted metaphysical interest in the nature of the soul, its relation to material things, the origin of the world and the place of man in it—problems summed up by Kant as concerned with "God, freedom and immortality."

It is the object of The Royal Institute of Philosophy to provide a forum for the rational discussion of these and similar questions. This requires strenuous thinking, but it is hoped that the services which the Institute provides, and particularly the existence of a journal in which such thinking is carried out in language as free from technicalities as the nature of the subject allows, will help to maintain standards of intellectual appreciation and satisfy a cultural need.

The annual subscription to the Institute is £1 10s. Members receive the Institute's Journal, PHILOSOPHY, published quarterly, and may, of course, attend the Lectures.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Full-time students applying for election are eligible for Associate Membership which carries all the privileges of full Membership save that of participating in the government of the Institute. The period during which a student may enjoy Associate Membership is limited to three years, and the subscription is at the much reduced rate of 8s. 6d. per annum.

CENTRES

Local centres of the Institute have been established at Bangor, Newcastle and Durham. A branch has also recently been established at Los Angeles.

THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH PRIZE ESSAY

Readers will be glad to learn that the competition sponsored by the Society for Psychical Research has been won by Mr. L. C. Robertson, Director and Secretary of the Institute. Mr. Robertson chose subject (*b*). An announcement of the competition was contained in the July 1956 number of PHILOSOPHY.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

The second Annual Conference of the Philosophy of Science Group will be held at Wortley Hall, University of Nottingham, from Friday to Sunday, September 20–22, 1957. Details will be announced later.

COUNCIL FOR ASSISTING REFUGEE PHILOSOPHERS

In the year 1939 the chief philosophical societies in Great Britain set up this Council, under the Presidency of Lord Samuel, for assisting refugee philosophers from the continent. A small fund was raised and this was administered through the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. The Council was also instrumental in making provision for some of the activities of the Brentano Institute to be continued in this country, and in facilitating the arrangements whereby Professor Oscar Kraus was enabled to deliver his Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh in 1940–41.

After the outbreak of war responsibility for the activity of the Council was vested in a small Executive Committee consisting of Professor C. D. Broad (Chairman), Professor G. E. Moore, Professor M. Ginsberg and C. A. Mace (Secretary and Treasurer). This committee transferred the balance of the funds of the Council to the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning except for the small sum of £26 which was retained in case circumstances should arise which might call for a revival of activities on the part of the Council as such.

It has now been decided by the Executive Committee that any further action that might be called for would best be taken by some larger and more central organization. Accordingly, with the agreement of representatives of the associated societies, the Committee has now transferred the balance of its funds to the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, earmarked for use in the interest of refugee philosophers. It is understood that the money can be used to assist refugee philosophers from Hungary.

JOHN LOCKE: COLLECTED EDITION

THE CLARENDON PRESS,
OXFORD.

May 16, 1957

DEAR SIR,

The Delegates of the Clarendon Press have now agreed to undertake a collected edition of the writings of John Locke. The edition will begin with his correspondence, edited by Dr. E. S. de Beer.

It is probable that many of Locke's letters (or letters to him) are extant in private hands, either as part of family heritages or in formed collections of historical documents and autographs. The Delegates would be grateful for any information which would assist the editor in making the edition as comprehensive as possible.

Yours truly,

D. M. DAVIN.

The Editor, PHILOSOPHY, 14a Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

Forms of application for membership may be had on application to the Assistant Secretary at University Hall, 14 Gordon Square, W.C.1.